screen

Special Number: Brecht and a Revolutionary Cinema

Brecht/Barthes/Benjamin
Kuhle Wampe
Stanley Mitchell and Ben Brewster: The Alienation Effect
Colin MacCabe: Realism
Stephen Heath: Distanciation

ETV

FILMS

Brecht & Weigel—28 mins. German Commentary
Hire fee £3.50 (includes scenes from *Mother Courage*,
Die Mutter, Coriolan, Arturo Ui and *Days of the Commune*)

Ernst Busch Sings Brecht—22 mins. Hire fee £2.00

Children Paint Brecht—10 mins. Hire fee £1.50.
English Commentary

GRAMOPHONE RECORDS IN GERMAN

ETV have imported an important group of Brecht recordings
from the German Democratic Republic which are now avail-
able for outright purchase. Supplies are rationed and orders
will be dealt with in strict rotation. All prices include postage
(UK only), packing and VAT. CASH WITH ORDER.

titles include:

Mother Courage — the original Berliner Ensemble produc-
tion complete on 3 LPs with illustrated brochure and text.
ETV 1. £11.50 per set

Days of the Commune — original Berliner Ensemble per-
formance complete on 3 LPs with illustrated brochure and
text. ETV 2. £11.50 per set

Brecht's Flüchtlingsgespräche, 1 LP. ETV 5. £3.50 each
Brecht's Lehrgedicht — Von der Natur der Menschen, 1 LP.
ETV 6. £3.50 each

Gisela May Sings Brecht, 1 LP. ETV 7. £3.50 each
Ernst Busch Sings Brecht/Eisler, 1 LP. ETV 8. £3.50 each

a complete list of records and films available on request

Educational and Television Films Ltd.
247a Upper Street, Highbury Corner, London N1 1QR
(one minute from Highbury tube — Victoria Line).
01-226 2298/9

Brecht and a Revolutionary Cinema?

It has become a commonplace to cite Bertolt Brecht, along with Sergei Eisenstein, Vladimir Mayakovsky and John Heartfield, as exemplary for a revolutionary art today. However, it seems paradoxical to cite Brecht as an exemplar of revolutionary *cinema*, given that only one of his many film projects came to be realised in anything like the form he planned. But there are more ways than one in which a work or a strategy can be exemplary.

The one project that did result in a Brechtian film (though it was not exclusively his work since, like so many of his plays, it was a collaborative work) is *Kuhle Wampe*, made in Berlin in 1931. Different assessments of this film are possible; in their articles in this issue James Pettifer and Bernard Eisenschitz offer very different verdicts. Nevertheless, within the limitations imposed by economic difficulties and political censorship (no precensored copy survives) *Kuhle Wampe* is an exemplary revolutionary film in its use of montage (in a wider sense than the one currently most often encountered) and in its demonstration of the application of Brecht's theatrical techniques to the very different conditions of the cinema. It is also an example of the organisation of an artistic work with a political aim in view in a particular conjuncture. Finally, Brecht's own reflections on this film, which we also publish, are crucial statements of his notions of the relation between aesthetics and politics.

However, *Kuhle Wampe* cannot constitute an example in the sense of a film to be copied by revolutionary film-makers. A work of art, and *a fortiori* a revolutionary work of art, is an intervention in an aesthetic and political conjuncture; a copy made thirty years later is transformed by the interval alone. He who sets out to copy Hawks today will really be copying Bogdanovich. But if the notion of the exemplar is extended from the model work to the model intervention, ie, to Brecht's *practice* in the cinema, it becomes important to consider his work in America.

Brecht lived in Hollywood from 1941 to 1947, and earned his living largely by work on film scripts. Only one film, however, and one of the first he was involved with, is given much space in his *Arbeitsjournal*, and that is Fritz Lang's *Hangmen also Die* (1943). The vast majority of his film work in these years is passed over in complete silence, so that it is now almost impossible to say which films he had a hand in. The journal, as its name implies, is not simply a day-by-day account of events, but a record of Brecht's *work*. For Brecht, there was no simple functional

relation between work and earning a living, nor was his 'real' work as an artist a sublime activity pursued independently of vulgar money matters; rather the journal reveals that emphasis on the *tension* between professional and private life that Benjamin saw as the ' task of all political lyricism ' but which is extendable to other fields of artistic activity than the lyric. But the tension is revealed only in the journal, not in the films. And Brecht soon despaired of his film work in Hollywood ever becoming more than a way to earn a living. The final word in the journal on *Hangmen also Die* is as follows:

' The Lang film (now called *Hangmen also Die*) has given me the breathing-space for three plays ' (24 June 1943, vol 2, p 576).

Thereafter his film work is less and less frequently mentioned. In his article on *Kuhle Wampe*, Bernard Eisenschitz argues that Brecht's practice in Hollywood was itself exemplary. If so, the example is not to be found in his contribution to any films made in Hollywood at this time, but only in the *Arbeitsjournal*.

There are, however, other forms of the tension Benjamin demands. As far as their productions of films is concerned, other Hollywood film makers, both exiles like Brecht (eg, Douglas Sirk) and natives (eg, Samuel Fuller), may be more ' exemplary ', but precisely insofar as they are less politically responsible, more politically naive than Brecht – ie, more irresponsibly or more naively political (no one and no work is apolitical). Sirk was a member of the European intelligentsia who deliberately rejected the elite world of high art for the popular culture of the cinema as a reaction against his class's readiness to accept fascism once it was in power. Fuller is a liberal who in his struggle to convert cinema into an instrument of propaganda for his views independently reinvented some of the devices of epic theatre. Both achieved an aesthetic success denied Brecht in Hollywood, but at the cost of deep political ambiguity. Brecht did not imagine that he could make a *Kuhle Wampe* in Hollywood. He hoped to apply the ' cunning to broadcast the truth among the many '. His projects envisaged an adaptation ·of the methods of the parable plays to the Hollywood genres; they include a biopic on Henri Dunant, the founder of the Red Cross, as the story of a man unable to resist the temptation to do good, to the ruin of himself and his family, and a version of *Puntila* as a Western. But they all came to nothing. Even Sirk seemed destined for a time to abandon the cinema altogether and become a Californian rancher raising chickens and alfalfa. But if Brecht might have made an *All that Heaven Allows*, he could not have made the *Magnificent Obsession* that was a necessary step towards it. *A fortiori* he could not have shared Fuller's naive pro-Americanism. Revolutionary cunning can go only so far, and at this period this was not far enough for Hollywood.

6   At the other extreme are the artists of the ' historical avant-gardes ', the authors of the ' modern text ' frequently referred to in *Screen*. These authors, too, are often regarded as exemplary for a revolutionary art, yet Barthes, in an article in this issue, suggests that Brecht and politically revolutionary artists in general are not authors of the text in this sense. The militant artist cannot be as ' radical ' as the avant-gardes, he must remember that ' communism is moderate ', as we learn in *The Mother*. On the other hand, he cannot tolerate the political equivocation which is the price of a productive collaboration with the capitalist film industry. The extent to which such theses are true, and what precisely they would mean, are the main objects of this issue of *Screen*, and they are discussed in it mainly in relation to Brecht's theoretical texts, not in an inversion of the conventional bourgeois notion that Brecht's theatrical practice is one thing, and a remarkable one, his theory is another, and one to be glossed over, but because it is above all his reflections on his own work in literature, theatre and cinema and on the politico-aesthetic controversies of his day that provide the framework within which it is possible to begin to think of a revolutionary cinema. It is in this sense above all that Brecht is exemplary for a magazine like *Screen*, and it is to this project that we devote this special number.

<div align="right">

BEN BREWSTER
COLIN MACCABE

</div>

English translations of Brecht's writings are still far from complete: the most important collection of his theoretical writings remains John Willet's recently reissued Brecht on Theatre *(Eyre Methuen 1964 & 1974). Throughout this issue, quotations from Brecht are therefore referred to the* Gesammelte Werke in 20 Bänden, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt 1967, *giving the volume numbers in Roman, the page numbers in Arabic numerals. Translations from Brecht's German texts given here, are the responsibility of the authors of the article unless otherwise stated.*

In a future issue we are to publish an interview about *Kuhle Wampe* with one of the producers, George Hoellering, who tells us that he hopes to obtain a print of *Kuhle Wampe* in the near future for exhibition at the Academy Cinema.

Colin MacCabe

Throughout his life Brecht conducted, together with a continually experimenting artistic practice, a sustained theoretical reflection on his own and other's work. In the early thirties drawing up a project for a new critical review Brecht wrote

' Amongst other things the review understands the word
" criticism " in its double sense – transforming *dialectically* the
totality of subjects into a *permanent crisis* and thus conceiving
the epoch as a critical period in both meanings of the term.
And this point of view necessarily entails a rehabilitation of
theory in its productive rights.' (XVIII, 85-6)[1]

The importance of theory and its productive effects in the aesthetic domain persists as a central concern throughout Brecht's writings. Two areas in which Brecht felt the need for theory to be par- ticularly pressing were the debate on realism in which Lukács' positions achieved dominance in the early thirties and the rela- tively new cultural area of the cinema. His reflections on these topics were published in 1967 under the titles *Über den Realismus* and *Über Film* and these sections have since been totally trans- lated into French and sections of them have recently been pub- lished in English.[2] The aim of this article is to elaborate some of the positions advanced in those two works. It is not an attempt to extract a coherent theory from Brecht's theoretical writings (and still less to offer a coherent account of the relation of this theory to his artistic practice) but rather *a set of digressions which take as their starting point some Brechtian theses.*

The Classic Realist Text
' Criticism, at least Marxist criticism, must proceed methodically
and concretely in each case, in short scientifically. Loose talk
is of no help here, whatever its vocabulary. In no circumstances
can the necessary guide-lines for a practical definition of realism
be derived from literary works alone. (Be like Tolstoy – but
without his weaknesses! Be like Balzac – only up-to-date!)
Realism is an issue not only for literature: it is a major political,
philosophical and practical issue and must be handled and
explained as such – as a matter of general human interest.' (XIX,
307)[3]

One of the difficulties of any discussion about realism is the lack of any really effective vocabulary with which to discuss the topic. Most discussions turn on the problems of the production of dis-

course which will fully adequate the real. This notion of adequacy is accepted both by the realists and indeed by the anti-realists whose main argument is that no discourse can ever be adequate to the multifarious nature of the real. This notion of the real is, however, I wish to suggest, a notion which is tied to a particular type of literary production – the nineteenth century·realist novel. The dominance of this novel form is such that people still tend to confuse the general question of realism with the particular forms of the nineteenth century realist novel. In order to make the discussion clearer I want therefore to attempt to define the structure which typifies the nineteenth century realist novel and to show how that structure can also be used to describe a great number of films. The detour through literature is necessary because, in many ways, the structure is much more obvious there and also because of the historical dominance of the classic realist novel over much film production. What to a large extent will be lacking in this article is the specific nature of the film form but this does not seem to me to invalidate the setting up of certain essential categories from which further discussion must progress. The structure I will attempt to disengage I shall call the classic realist text and I shall apply it to novels and films.

A classic realist text may be defined as one in which there is a hierarchy amongst the discourses which compose the text and this hierarchy is defined in terms of an empirical notion of truth. Perhaps the easiest way to understand this is through a reflection on the use of inverted commas within the classic realist novel. While those sections in the text which are contained in inverted commas may cause a certain difficulty for the reader – a certain confusion vis-à-vis what really is the case — this difficulty is abolished by the unspoken (or more accurately the unwritten) prose that surrounds them. In the classical realist novel the narrative prose functions as a metalanguage that can state all the truths in the object language – those words held in inverted commas – and can also explain the relation of this object language to the real. The metalanguage can thereby explain the relation of this object language to the world and the strange methods by which the object languages attempt to express truths which are straight-forwardly conveyed in the metalanguage. What I have called an unwritten prose (or a metalanguage) is exactly that language, which while placing other languages between inverted commas and regard-ing them as certain material expressions which express certain meanings, regards those same meanings as finding transparent expression within the metalanguage itself. Transparent in the sense that the metalanguage is not regarded as material; it is dematerialised to achieve perfect representation – to let the iden-tity of things shine through the window of words. For insofar as the metalanguage is treated itself as material – it, too, can be reinterpreted; new meanings can be found for it in a further

metalanguage. The problem is the problem that has troubled
western thought since the pre-Socratics recognised the separa-
tion between what was said and the act of saying. This separa-
tion must be thought both as time and space – as the space,
which in the distance from page to eye or mouth to ear allows
the possibility of misunderstanding – as the time taken to
traverse the page or listen to an utterance which ensures the de-
ferred interpretation of words which are always only defined by
what follows. The problem is that in the moment that we say a
sentence the meaning (what is said) seems fixed and evident but
what is said does not exist solely for the moment and is open to
further interpretations. Even in this formulation of the problem
I have presupposed an original moment when there is strict con-
temporaneity between the saying and what is said, but the diffi-
culty is more radical for there is no such original moment. The
separation is always already there as we cannot locate the presence
of what is said – distributed as it is through space – nor the
present of what is said – distributed as it is through time.

This separation bears witness to the real as articulated. The
thing represented does not appear in a moment of pure identity
as it tears itself out of the world and presents itself, but rather is
caught in an articulation in which each object is defined in a set
of differences and oppositions.

It is this separation that the unwritten text attempts to *anneal*,
to make whole, through denying its own status as writing – as
marks of material difference distributed through time and space.
Whereas other discourses within the text are considered as
material which are open to re-interpretation, the narrative dis-
course simply allows reality to appear and denies its own status
as articulation. This relationship between discourses can be clearly
seen in the work of such a writer as George Eliot. In the scene in
Middlemarch where Mr Brooke goes to visit the Dagley's farm we
read two different languages. One is the educated, well-meaning,
but not very intelligent discourse of Mr Brooke and the other is
the uneducated, violent and very nearly unintelligible discourse of
the drunken Dagley. But the whole dialogue is surrounded by a
metalanguage, which being unspoken is also unwritten, and which
places these discourses in inverted commas and can thus discuss
these discourses' relation to truth – a truth which is illuminatingly
revealed in the metalanguage. The metalanguage reduces the object
languages into a simple division between form and content and
extracts the meaningful content from the useless form. One can
see this process at work in the following passage which ends the
scene:

' He [Mr Brooke] had never been insulted on his own land before,
and had been inclined to regard himself as a general favourite
(we are all apt to do so, when we think of our own amiability

more than what other people are likely to want of us). When he had quarrelled with Caleb Garth twelve years before he had thought that the tenants would be pleased at the landlord's taking everything into his own hands.

Some who follow the narrative of this experience may wonder at the midnight darkness of Mr Dagley; but nothing was easier in those times than for a hereditary farmer of his grade to be ignorant, in spite somehow of having a rector in the twin parish who was a gentleman to the backbone, a curate nearer at hand who preached more learnedly than the rector, a landlord who had gone into everything, especially fine art and social improvement and all the lights of Middlemarch only three miles off '.[4]

This passage provides the necessary interpretations for the discourses that we have read earlier in the chapter. Both the discourses of Dagley and Mr Brooke are revealed as springing from two types of ignorance which the metalanguage can expose and reveal. So we have Mr Brooke's attitude to what his tenants thought of him contrasted with the reality which is available through the narrative prose. No discourse is allowed to speak for itself but rather it must be placed in a context which will reduce it to a simple explicable content. And in the claim that the narrative prose has direct access to a final reality we can find the claim of the classic realist novel to present us with the truths of human nature. The ability to reveal the truth about Mr Brooke is the ability that guarantees the generalisations of human nature.

Thus then a first definition of the classic realist text – but does this definition carry over into films where it is certainly less evident where to locate the dominant discourse? It seems to me that it does and in the following fashion. The narrative prose achieves its position of dominance because it is in the position of knowledge and this function of knowledge is taken up in the cinema by the narration of events. Through the knowledge we gain from the narrative we can split the discourses of the various characters from their situation and compare what is said in these discourses with what has been revealed to us through narration. The camera shows us what happens – it tells the truth against which we can measure the discourses. A good example of this classical realist structure is to be found in Pakula's film *Klute*. This film is of particular interest because it was widely praised for its realism on its release. Perhaps even more significantly it tended to be praised for its realistic presentation of the leading woman, Bree (played by Jane Fonda).

In *Klute* the relationship of dominance between discourses is peculiarly accentuated by the fact that the film is interspersed with fragments of Bree talking to her psychiatrist. This subjective discourse can be exactly measured against the reality provided by the unfolding of the story. Thus all her talk of independence is por-

trayed as finally an illusion as we discover, to no great surprise but to our immense relief, what she really wants is to settle down in the mid-West with John Klute (the detective played by Donald Sutherland) and have a family. The final sequence of the film is particularly telling in this respect. While Klute and Bree pack their bags to leave, the soundtrack records Bree at her last meeting with her psychiatrist. Her own estimation of the situation is that it most probably won't work but the reality of the image ensures us that this is the way it will really be. Indeed Bree's monologue is even more interesting – for in relation to the reality of the image it marks a definite advance on her previous statements. She has gained insight through the plot development and like many good heroines of classic realist texts her discourse is more nearly adequate to the truth at the end of the film than at the beginning. But if a progression towards knowledge is what marks Bree, it is possession of knowledge which marks the narrative, the reader of the film and John Klute himself. For Klute is privileged by the narrative as the one character whose discourse is also a discourse of knowledge. Not only is Klute a detective and thus can solve the problem of his friend's disappearance – he is also a man, and a man who because he has not come into contact with the city has not had his virility undermined. And it is as a full-blooded man that he can know not only the truth of the mystery of the murders but also the truth of the woman Bree. Far from being a film which goes any way to portraying a woman liberated from male definition (a common critical response), Klute exactly guarantees that the real essence of woman can only be discovered and defined by a man.

The analysis sketched here is obviously very schematic but what, hopefully, it does show is that the structure of the classic realist text can be found in film as well. That narrative of events – the knowledge which the film provides of how things really are – is the metalanguage in which we can talk of the various characters in the film. What would still remain to be done in the elaboration of the structure of the classic realist text in cinema is a more detailed account of the actual mechanisms by which the narrative is privileged (and the way in which one or more of the characters within the narrative can be equally privileged) and also a history of the development of this dominant narrative. On the synchronic level it would be necessary to attempt an analysis of the relationship between the various types of shot and their combination into sequences – are there for example certain types of shot which are coded as subjective and therefore subordinate to others which are guaranteed as objective? In addition how does music work as the guarantee or otherwise of truth? On the diachronic level it would be necessary to study how this form was produced – what relationship obtains between the classic realist text and technical advances such as the development of the talkie?

What ideological factors were at work in the production and dominance of the classic realist text?

To return, however, to the narrative discourse. It is necessary to attempt to understand the type of relations that this dominant discourse produces. The narrative discourse cannot be mistaken in its identifications because the narrative discourse is not present as discourse – as articulation. The unquestioned nature of the narrative discourse entails that the only problem that reality poses is to go and look and see what *Things* there *are*. The relationship between the reading subject and the real is placed as one of pure specularity. The real is not articulated – it is. These features imply two essential features of the classic realist text:

1 The classic realist text cannot deal with the real as contradictory.
2 In a reciprocal movement the classic realist text ensures the position of the subject in a relation of dominant specularity.

The Classic Realist Text as Progressive art

' In general, do not be content with providing an insight into the literature of the country in question, but follow the details of literary life itself. Consider literary phenomenon as events and as social events.' (Principles for the review *Das Wort*) (XIX, 307).[5]

It may be objected that the account that I have given of the classic literary text is deficient in the following extremely important fashion. It ignores what is the usual criterion for realism, that is to say subject matter. The category of the classic realist text lumps together in book and film *The Grapes of Wrath* and *The Sound of Music*, *L'Assommoir* and *Toad of Toad Hall*. In order to find a criterion with which to make distinctions within the area of the classic realist text it is necessary to reflect on contradiction. I have stated that the classic realist text cannot deal with the real in its contradiction because of the unquestioned status of the representation at the level of the dominant discourse. In order to understand how contradiction can be dealt with it is necessary to investigate the workings of an operation that is often opposed to representation, namely montage.

In his essay on ' Word and Image ' in *The Film Sense*, Eisenstein defines montage. Amongst numerous examples of montage he quotes the following from Ambrose Bierce's *Fantastic Fables*:

' A Woman in widow's weeds was weeping upon a grave.
" Console yourself, madam," said a Sympathetic Stranger.
" Heaven's mercies are infinite. There is another man somewhere, beside your husband, with whom you can still be happy."
    " There was," she sobbed – " there was, but this is his grave." '[6]

Eisenstein explains the effect of·this fable in terms of an interaction between the visual representations in the story. The woman

is a representation and so is the mourning dress — they are, in Eisenstein's terms, objectively representable — but the juxtaposition of these representations gives rise to a new image that is not representable — namely that the woman is a widow. It is the expectation created by the juxtaposition which is undercut by the final line uttered by the woman. For the moment we shall only notice the following point:

1. that Eisenstein, concerned very largely with a simple definition of representation, fails to recognise that widow is just as objective a representation as woman or mourning dress and

2. that montage involves both an interaction between representations and a shock.

Eisenstein continues his explanation by expanding his distinction between representation (the raw material of the montage) and image (that which is produced by the montage itself).

' Take a white circular disc of average size and smooth surface, its circumference divided into sixty equal parts. At every fifth division is set a figure in the order of succession of 1 to 12. At the centre of the disc are fixed two metal rods, moving freely on their fixed ends, pointed at their free ends, one being equal to the radius of the disc, the other rather shorter. Let the longer pointed rod have its free end resting at the figure 12 and the shorter in succession pointing towards the figures 1, 2, 3 and so on up to 12. This will comprise a series of geometrical representations of successive relations of the two metal rods to one another expressed in the dimensions 30, 60, 90 degrees, and so on up to 360 degrees.

If, however, this disc is provided with a mechanism that imparts steady movement to the metal rods, the geometrical figure formed on the surface acquires a special meaning: it is now not simply a *representation*, it is an *image* of time.'[7]

The confusion that led Eisenstein to count woman and mourning dress as representable but widow as non-representable can be seen at work again in this passage. Eisenstein thinks of the world as being composed of basic objects available to sight which are then linked together in various ways by the perceiving subject with the aid of his past experiences. That this is his position is made abundantly clear in the passage which follows the passage I have just quoted. He takes the example of Vronsky looking at his watch, after Anna Karenina has told him that she is pregnant, and being so shocked that he sees the position of the hands but not the time. Thus the position of the hands is the primitive object in the world and the time is what the human subject creates through his linking of this object with other items of his experience. Montage is thus, for Eisenstein, in this passage (which must not be confused with Eisenstein's cinematic practice), the manipulation of definite *representations to produce images in the mind*

of the spectator. But now it can be seen that this definition of montage does not contradict representation at all. If we understand by representation the rendering of identities in the world then Eisenstein's account of montage is not opposed to representation but is simply a secondary process which comes after representation. Eisenstein would have montage linking onto representation but not in any sense challenging it. The representation starts from an identity in the world which it re-presents. the montage starts from representations, identities, and combines them to form an image.

Eisenstein's acceptance of representation can be seen in those passages where representation is contrasted with montage. For Eisenstein the opposite to montage is ' Affadavit-exposition ' which he defines as ' *in film terms, representations shot from a single set-up* '.[8] Thus montage is the showing of the same representation from different points of view. And it is from this point that we can begin to challenge Eisenstein's conception of montage. A point of view suggests two things. Firstly a view – something that is seen – and secondly a location from which the view may be had. the sight may be seen. Thus the suggestion is that there are different locations from which we can see. But in all cases the sight remains the same – the activity of representation is not the determining factor in the sight seen but simply the place from where it is seen. The inevitable result of this is that there is something the same which we all see but which appears differently because of our position. But if there is identity; if there is something over and above the views which can be received at different points then this identity must be discernable from some other ' point of view '. And this neutral point of view is exactly the ' representations shot from a single set-up '.

What is at work in Eisenstein's argument is the idea that there is some fixed reality which is available to us from an objective point of view (the single set-up). Montage is simply putting these fixed elements together in such a way that the subject brings forth other elements in his experience – but without any change in the identities, the elements that are being rendered. It is essential to realise that this account leaves both subject and object unchallenged and that montage becomes a kind of super-representation which is more effective at demonstrating the real qualities of the object through the links it can form within the subject. Thus Eisenstein would analyse the Bierce story as the representation of a given set of elements which are first organised in one way then in another. There are, however, no such set of fixed elements in the Bierce story. It is not that there is a set of elements which the reader composes ' in his mind ' but rather that these elements are already determined by the method of representation. What Eisenstein ignores is that the method of representation (the language: verbal or cinematic) determines in its structural activity

(the oppositions which can be articulated) both the places where
the object ' appears ' and the ' point ' from which the object is
seen. It is this point which is exactly the place allotted to the
reading subject.

A careful analysis of the Bierce story may enable us to discover
how montage operates and why that operation is difficult to grasp.
We can read three different discourses at work in the Bierce story
(a discourse being defined as a set of significant oppositions). The
narrative discourse, the discourse of the Sympathetic Stranger and
the discourse of the Woman. The question is whether as Eisen-
stein holds, that the narrative discourse represents simply a woman
and a mourning dress. But ' woman ' is not some simple identity
as Eisenstein would have us believe. Whereas the Sympathetic
Stranger identifies woman in terms of religion and state – thus our
relationships are determined in heaven and are institutionalised by
the state on earth – the Woman determines her own identity as
' woman ' in terms of desire and transgression – relationships are
formed through the transgressing of the state's institutions and
this transgression is linked with a certain sexuality; for relation-
ships between a man and a woman outside the bond of holy
matrimony are explicitly sexual. We can now understand that the
montage works through a contest between the identities offered
by the different discourses. In the Bierce story, the woman's state-
ment jars with what has gone before so that we re-read it – the
identifications that we made (that were made for us) are under-
mined by new ones. What is thrown into doubt is exactly the
identity (the nature) of woman and this doubt is achieved through
the ' shock ' of the woman's statement as the identity already
proferred is subverted. It is also clear from this analysis that there
is no neutral place from which we can see the view and where all
the points are located. There is no possible language of ' affadavit-
exposition ' that would show the scene ' as it really is '. For how
we see the scene will be determined by the way in which we
identify ' woman ' – and this determination is a feature of the
available discourses; the discourses in which ' woman ' can figure.

We are still, however, left with the problem of how we can
mistake this effect of montage, as I have suggested Eisenstein has
done, and the answer to this question can be found in the apparent
similarity of the discourses in the Bierce story. For the three dis-
courses are so similar that we can be persuaded to read them as
one. All that is missing from the first and second is provided by
the third. The third discourse can be read as ' closing ' the text.
For with the information thus given to us we can read the previous
discourses in a ' final ' – that is to say once and for all – manner.
We can fill in the gaps in the first two discourses – see the real
identities which are mistaken. But this is to ignore the fact that
what is at question in the story are different discourses. Different
discourses can be defined as discourses in which different oppo-

sitions are possible. Although at one level – the level of the legal relationship to the body and the grave – both discourses coincide (she *is* or *is not* the wife), at another level there are a set of oppositions of an emotional nature (she *does* or *does not* mourn some man) which the stranger cannot articulate outside the oppositions determined by the legal relationship. Bierce's story, through the coincidences between the discourses on one level, suggests to Eisenstein a set of identities in the world. But the identities rest in the discourses. Thus opposed to Eisenstein's concept of montage resting on the juxtapositions of identities already rendered, we could talk of montage as the effect generated by a conflict of discourse in which the oppositions available in the juxtaposed discourses are contradictory and in conflict.

All this by way of explaining that the classic realist text (a heavily ' closed ' discourse) cannot deal with the real in its contradictions and that in the same movement it fixes the subject in a point of view from which everything becomes obvious. There is, however, a level of contradiction into which the classic realist text can enter. This is the contradiction between the dominant discourse of the text and the dominant ideological discourses of the time. Thus a classic realist text in which a strike is represented as a just struggle in which oppressed workers attempt to gain some of their rightful wealth would be in'contradiction with certain contemporary ideological discourses and as such might be classified as progressive. It is here that subject matter enters into the argument and where we can find the justification for Marx and Engels's praise of Balzac and Lenin's texts on the revolutionary force of Tolstoy's texts which ushered the Russian peasant onto the stage of history. Within contemporary films one could think of the films of Costa-Gavras or such television documentaries as *Cathy Come Home.* What is, however, still impossible for the classic realist text is to offer any perspectives for struggle due to its inability to investigate contradiction. It is thus not surprising that these films tend either to be linked to a social-democratic conception of progress – if we reveal injustices then they will go away – or certain *ouvrieriste* tendencies which tend to see the working class, outside any dialectical movement, as the simple possessors of truth. It is at this point that Brecht's demand that literary and artistic productions be regarded as social events gains its force. The contradictions between the dominant discourse in a classic realist text and the dominant ideological discourses at work in a society are what provide the criteria for discriminating within the classic realist text. And these criteria will often resolve themselves into questions of subject-matter. That this tends to leave open any question about the eternal values of art is not something that should worry us. As Brecht remarks:

' To be frank, I do not set such an excessively high value on the

concept of endurance. How can we foresee whether future
generations will wish to preserve the memory of these figures
[*figures created by Balzac or Tolstoy*]? (Balzac and Tolstoy
will scarcely be in a position to oblige them to do so, however
ingenious the methods with which they set their plots in motion.)
I suspect it will depend on whether it will be a socially relevant
statement if someone says: " That " (and " that " will refer to
a contemporary) " is a Père Goriot character ". Perhaps such
characters will not survive? Perhaps they precisely arose in a
cramping web of relations of a type which will no longer exist.'[9]
(XIX, 308-9)

Moments of subversion and strategies of subversion

' The practical methods of the revolution are not revolutionary,
they are dictated by the class struggle. It is for this reason that
great writers find themselves ill at ease in the class struggle,
they behave as though the struggle was already finished, and they
deal with the new situation, conceived as collectivist, which is the
aim of the revolution. The revolution of the great writers is
permanent.'[10] (XVIII, 16)

In the last issue of *Screen* we published Franco Fortini's text on
' The Writer's Mandate ' which took the position that art is that
area which deals with the irreconcilable contradictions of life over
and beyond the particular contradictions of the class struggle and
of their successful resolution in the revolution. It was suggested
in the Editorial that, in order to avoid a fall into romantic and
ultra-left positions, these irreconcilable differences had to be
theorised within the scientific concepts offered to us by psycho-
analysis. Freud's theory is a theory of the construction of the
subject: the entry of the small infant into language and society
and the methods by which it learns what positions, as subject, it
can take up. This entry into the symbolic (the whole cultural space
which is structured, like language through a set of differences and
oppositions) is most easily traced in the analytic situation
through that entry which is finally determining for the infant –
the problem of sexual difference. Freud's insight is that the un-
problematic taking up of the position of the subject entails the
repression of the whole mechanism of the subject's construction.
The subject is seen as the founding source of meanings – unprob-
lematically standing outside an articulation in which it is, in fact,
defined. This view of the subject as founding source is philo-
sophically encapsulated in Descartes' *cogito*: I think, therefore I
am – the I in simple evidence to itself provides a moment of pure
presence which can found the enterprise of analysing the world.
Jacques Lacan, the French psychoanalyst, has read Freud as
reformulating the Cartesian *cogito* and destroying the subject as
source and foundation – Lacan rewrites the *cogito*, in the light

of Freud's discoveries as: I think where I am not and I am where
I do not think. We can understand this formulation as the indicat-
ing of the fundamental misunderstanding (*méconnaissance*) which
is involved in the successful use of language (or any other area of
the symbolic which is similarly structured) in which the subject
is continually ignored as being caught up in a process of articula-
tion to be taken as a fixed place founding the discourse. The un-
conscious is that effect of language which escapes the conscious
subject in the distance between the act of signification in which
the subject passes from signifier to signifier and what is signified
in which the subject finds himself in place as, for example, the
pronoun ' I '. The importance of phenomena like verbal slips is
that they testify to the existence of the unconscious through the
distance between what was said and what the conscious subject
intended to say. They thus testify to the distance between the
subject of the act of signification and the conscious subject (the
ego). In this distance there is opened a gap which is the area of
desire. What is essential to all of those psychic productions which
Freud uses in the analytic interpretation is that they bear wit-
ness to the lack of control of the conscious subject over his dis-
courses. The mechanisms of the unconscious can indeed be seen as
the mechanisms of language. Condensation is the work of metaphor
which brings together two signifieds under one signifier and dis-
placement is the constant process along the signifying chain. The
ego is constantly caught in this fundamental misunderstanding
(*méconnaissance*) about language in which from an illusory present
it attempts to read only one signified as present in the metaphor
and attempts to bring the signifying chain to an end in a per-
petually deferred present.

The relationship between the unconscious and desire, the subject
and language is concisely summarised by Lacan in the following
passage:

' There is not *an* unconscious because then there would be an
unconscious desire which was obtuse, heavy, caliban like, even
animal like, an unconscious desire lifted up from the depths which
would be primitive and would have to educate itself to the
superior level of consciousness. Completely on the contrary there
is desire because there is unconsciousness (*de l'inconscient*) –
that's to say language which escapes the subject in its structure
and in its effects and there is always at the level of language
something which is beyond consciousness and it is there that one
can situate the function of desire.'[11]

It is clear that the classic realist text, as defined above,
guarantees the position of the subject exactly outside any articula-
tion – the whole text works on the concealing of the dominant
discourse as articulation – instead the dominant discourse presents
itself exactly as the presentation of objects to the reading subject.

But within the classic realist text the dominant discourse can
be subverted, brought into question – the position of the subject
may be rendered problematic. If we return to our original example
of George Eliot we can see this process of subversion at work in
Daniel Deronda. Within the text there is a discourse, the writings
of Mordecai in Hebrew which are unmastered by the dominant
discourse. The text tells us that they are untranslatable and thus
that there is an area outside the text's control. This area is
exactly the area of the mother-tongue (Daniel's mother is Jewish)
and this mother-tongue subverts the assured positions of both the
characters in the text and the reading subject. My business here
is not to give a full analysis of George Eliot's work but rather to
indicate the possibility of *moments* within a classical realist text
which subvert it and its evident status for subject and object. We
are relatively fortunate in already possessing this kind of analysis
within the cinema in the *Cahiers du Cinéma*'s reading of John
Ford's *Young Mr Lincoln*.[12] These *moments* are those elements
which escape the control of the dominant discourse in the same
way as a neurotic symptom or a verbal slip attest to the lack of
control of the conscious subject. They open up another area than
that of representation – of subject and object caught in an eternal
paralysed fixity – in order to investigate the very movement of
articulation and difference – the movement of desire. (It is these
moments which have been privileged by Roland Barthes and the
Tel Quel group over the last few years and which have been
theorised through the evaluative concept of text.)[13] Over and above
these *moments* of subversion, however, there are what one
might call *strategies* of subversion. Instead of a dominant dis-
course which is transgressed at various crucial moments we can
find a systematic refusal of any such dominant discourse. One
of the best examples of a cinema which practices certain strategies
of subversion are the films of Roberto Rossellini. In *Germany Year
Zero*, for example, we can locate a multitude of ways in which
the reading subject finds himself without a position from which
the film can be regarded. Firstly, and most importantly, the
fact that the narrative is not priviliged in any way with regard
to the characters' discourses. The narrative does not produce for
us the knowledge with which we can then judge the truth of
those discourses. Rather than the narrative providing us with
knowledge – it provides us with various settings. Just as in
Brecht the ' fable ' serves simply as a procedure to produce the
various *gests*, so in Rossellini the story simply provides a frame-
work for various scenes which then constitute the picture of Ger-
many in year zero. (It might be remarked that this unimportance
of narrative is even more strongly marked in *Francesco Guillare
di Dio*, where the device of introducing the various tableaux with-
out narrative connection is more evident.) Indeed the narrative of
Germany Year Zero can be seen as a device to introduce the final

gest of Edmund's suicide – and in this it closely resembles the first reel of Brecht's own *Kuhle Wampe*. Secondly, Rossellini's narrative introduces many elements which are not in any sense resolved and which deny the possibility of regarding the film as integrated through a dominant discourse. The Allied soldiers, the street kids, the landlord, the Teacher's house – all these provide elements which stretch outside the narrative of the film and deny its dominance.

The result of these two strategies is that the characters themselves cannot be identified in any final way. Instead of their discourses, clothes, mannerisms being the punctual expressions of an identity fixed by the narrative – each element is caught up in a complex set of differences. The whole problematic of inside and outside which preoccupies the classic realist text is transformed into a series of relationships in which word, dress, action and gesture interact to provide a never-finished series of significant differences which is the character.

It may be objected that it is deliberately perverse to tear Rossellini away from realism with which he has been firmly connected both through his own statements and through critical reception. The realist element in Rossellini is not simply located in the subject matter, the traditional criterion of realism, for I have already argued that the subject matter is a secondary condition for realism. What typifies the classic realist text is the way the subject matter is ordered and articulated rather than its origins. To deal with the facts of the world is, in itself, not only a realist but also a materialist viewpoint. The materialist, however, must regard these materials as ordered within a certain mode of production, within which they find their definition. And it is here that one could begin to isolate that element of realist ideology which does figure in Rossellini's films as a certain block. If the reading subject is not offered any certain mode of entry into what is presented on the screen, he is offered a certain mode of entry to the screen itself. For the facts presented by the camera, if they are not ordered in fixed and final fashion amongst themselves, *are* ordered in themselves. The camera, in Rossellini's films is not articulated as part of the productive process of the film. What it shows is in some sense beyond argument and it is here that Rossellini's films show the traditional realist weakness of being unable to deal with contradiction. In *Viva l'Italia* the glaring omission of the film is the absence of Cavour. It is wrong to attack this omission on purely political grounds for it is an inevitable result of a certain lack of questioning of the camera itself. Garibaldi can be contrasted with Francisco II of Naples because their different conceptions of the world are so specifically tied to different historical eras that the camera can cope with their contradictions within an historical perspective. Here is the way the world is now – there is the way the world was then. But to introduce Cavour would

involve a simultaneous contradiction – a class contradiction. At
this point the camera itself, as a neutral agent, would become
impossible. For it would have to offer two present contradictory
articulations of the world and thus reveal its own presence. This
cannot happen within a Rossellini film where if we are con-
tinually aware of our presence in the cinema (particularly in his
historical films) – that presence itself is not questioned in any
way. We are not allowed any particular position to read the film
but we are allowed the position of a reader – an unproblematic
viewer – an eternally human nature working on the material pro-
vided by the camera.

A possible way of advancing on Rossellini's practice (there are
no obvious films which have marked such an advance although
some of Godard's early films might be so considered) would be
to develop the possibility of articulating contradiction. Much in
the way that James Joyce in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* investi-
gated the contradictory ways of articulating reality through an
investigation of the different forms of language, one could imagine
a more radical strategy of subversion than that practised by
Rossellini in which the possibilities of the camera would be brought
more clearly into play. What would mark such a cinema and
indeed any cinema of subversion would be that feature quoted by
Brecht at the beginning of this section – the fact that it would be
ill at ease in the class struggle, always concerned with an area of
contradiction beyond the necessity of the present revolution – the
ineliminable contradictions of the sexes, the eternal struggle
between Desire and Law, between articulation and position.

A possible category: the revolutionary text

' Socialist emulation forms individuals in a different way and
produces different individuals. Then there is the further question
whether it is anyway as individuating a process as the capitalist
competitive struggle ' (XIX, 310).[14]

' It is precisely this sharp opposition between work and leisure,
which is peculiar to the capitalist mode of production, that
separates all intellectual activity into those activities which serve
work and those activities which serve leisure. And those that serve
leisure are organised into a system for the reproduction of the labour
force. Distractions must not contain anything which is contained
in work. Distractions, in the interest of production, are committed
to non-production. Naturally, it is not thus that one can create a
style of life which forms a unique and coherent whole. And this
cannot be put down to the fact that art is dragged into the
productive process, but to the fact that it is incompletely involved
in the productive process and that it must create an island of
" non-production ". The man who buys a ticket transforms himself
in front of the screen into an idler and an exploiter (*Ausbeuter*).

Since booty (*Beute*) is placed within him here he is at it were a
victim of im-ploitation (*Einbeutung*) ' (XVIII, 169).[15]

In his article in this issue of *Screen*, Roland Barthes suggests that
revolutionary artists such as Eisenstein and Brecht must, of
necessity, remain within the world of representation. Barthes
throughout his article uses the structure of fetishism as his model
for the structure of representation. Stephen Heath's article in this
issue investigates this comparison at length but it might be useful
to indicate briefly the importance of the concept of fetishism. The
fetish is that object which places the subject in a position of
security outside of that terrifying area of difference opened up
by the perception of the mother's non-possession of the phallus.
Although most popular accounts of fetishism concentrate on the
fetishised objects, it is exemplary for Bathes as a structure which
holds both subject and object in place – it is the fetish above all
that holds the subject in position. What is essential to Barthes'
argument is the idea that the subject must always be the same –
caught in the same position vis-à-vis the world. Within this view a
revolutionary work of art can do no more than provide a correct
representation (provided by the Party) of the world. It may be
helpful to attain this goal to subvert the position of the subject
so that his acceptance of the new representation is facilitated but
finally the revolutionary artist is committed (condemned) to the
world of representation.

Within the framework I have constructed in this article one
could say that the revolutionary artist may practice certain strate-
gies of subversion but must finally content himself with the pro-
duction of a progressive realist text. The question I want to raise
here, and it must be emphasised that it can only be raised, is the
possibility of *another* activity which rather than the simple sub-
version of the subject or the representation of different (and
correct) identities, would consist of the displacement of the sub-
ject within ideology – a different constitution of the subject. It has
been accepted, particularly over the last ten years in France, that
the subject is the crucial concept for a Marxist theory of ideology
– a theory which would attempt to explain the non-coercive ways
in which the capitalist mode of production ensures the repro-
duction of labour power and would also attempt to furnish guide-
lines for the practical tasks in the question of changing ideology –
the whole problem of the cultural revolution. One of the difficulties
of using the subject as such a key term is that it is an ideological
notion which is willy-nilly transformed into a descriptive scientific
concept. The sub-ject – that which under-lies experience – is a
production, very largely, of modern European philosophy from
Descartes to its most sophisticated articulation in the philosophers
of German Idealism.

The main problem facing anyone wishing to articulate a theory

of film within a Marxist theory of ideology is that by and large
no such Marxist theory exists. Marx never really returned to the
subject after 1846 and none of the other great Marxist theoretic-
ians (with the possible exception of Gramsci) have found the time
to devote themselves to the problem. In many ways the starting
point of any such investigation must be Louis Althusser's essay
on the topic entitled ' Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses
(Notes towards an Investigation ').[16] In this essay Althusser puts
forward and defends the thesis that ideology has no history. By
this he does not mean that specific ideologies do not have a history
involving both internal and external factors but that the very form
of ideology is always the same. Althusser argues that the central
and unvarying feature of ideology is that it represents the imagin-
ary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence.
Ideology is always ' imaginary ' because these representations place
the subject in position in his society. In other words ideology
always has a place for a founding source outside the real
articulations.

Before discussing this thesis directly there are two preliminary
points that must be made, which while they do not touch directly
on the thesis need to be borne in mind when discussing it. The
first, which I have already touched on is that the subject is an
ideological notion. Moreover, it is an ideological notion which is
tied very closely to the rise of the bourgeoisie. It would be out-
side the scope of this article and beyond the author's competence
to trace the evolution of this notion with any precision. Suffice to
say that Cartesian philosophy, Newtonian physics and the gram-
mar of Port-Royal all involve very precisely that notion of a
unified subject of experience and that the birth of this notion in
the seventeenth century suggests very important links with the
growing economic and political domination of the European bour-
geoisie − the works of Locke provide perhaps the most obvious
example of the need for this category of subject in the justification
both of the new science and the new civil order.[17] All this simply
by way of a warning of the difficulties of dealing with the notion
of the subject.

Secondly it is necessary to realise what an important break
Althusser's thesis marks with certain methods of Hegelianising
Marx. For Althusser is concerned to attack that view which,
seeing ideology as ' merely ' illusory, holds out the promise that
the victorious conclusion to the class struggle will result in the
arrival of the new and true ideology which will correspond to the
real. This view merely incarnates the Hegelian vision that being
and consciousness will finally coincide within a simple view of
the end of class struggle. It is the proletariat that will realise the
beautiful dream of the real becoming rational and the rational
becoming real. Whatever reservations one may have about
Althusser's thesis, it is important that they do not involve a slip-

ping back into such a Hegelian model with all the lack of con-
tradiction and struggle that it implies.

To return, however, directly to Althusser's thesis. It seems an
inevitable result of this thesis that art can be allotted no specific
field of action other than its effects on the content of ideology.
As such art remains firmly within the realm of ideology, being
simply one of a number of internal factors within the evolution
of ideologies. This is, of course, quite compatible with classical
Marxist positions on art, but traditional Marxist thought has often
felt itself embarrassed by this simple lumping of art into ideology
– one of the most famous examples of such an embarrassment is
Marx's own attempt to deal with the problem of Greek art. There
is, however, another way in which this problem can be approached
and it is suggested by Brecht's remark on the position of the
spectator in the cinema (quoted at the beginning of this section)
and by much of Brecht's theory and practice. Here one would have
to deny both Althusser's (and Marx's) thesis that ideology has no
history and at the same time delimit a special area of activity
which is neither that of science nor that of ideology. This activity
might be characterised by its ability actually to work on and trans-
form the very form of ideology – to change the position of the
subject within ideology.

What Brecht suggests in his comments on the spectator in the
cinema is that the very position offered to the spectator is one
that guarantees the necessary re-production of labour power. It is
the cinema's ability to place the spectator in the position of a
unified subject that ensures the contradiction between his working
activity which is productive and the leisure activity in which he is
constantly placed as consumer. Althusser makes the very important
point in his essay that ideology is not a question of ideas circulat-
ing in people's heads but is inscribed in certain material practices.
The reactionary practice of the cinema is that which involves this
petrification of the spectator in a position of pseudo-dominance
offered by the metalanguage. This metalanguage, resolving as it
does all contradictions, places the spectator outside the realm of
contradiction and of action – outside of production.

Two films which suggest a way of combating this dominance
of the metalanguage, without falling into an agnostic position
vis-à-vis all discourses (which would be the extreme of a sub-
versive cinema – intent merely on disrupting any position of the
subject) are Kuhle Wampe (the film in which Brecht participated)
and Godard-Gorin's Tout Va Bien. In both films the narrative is
in no way privileged as against the characters. Rather the narra-
tive serves simply as the method by which various situations can
be articulated together. The emphasis is on the particular scenes
and the knowledge that can be gained from them rather than the
providing of a knowledge which requires no further activity –
which just is there on the screen. Indeed the presentation of the

individual's discourses is never stripped away from the character's actions but is involved in them. Whether it is a question of the petit-bourgeois and the workers discussing the waste of coffee in the S-Bahn or the various monologues in *Tout Va Bien* – it is not a question of the discourses being presented as pure truth content which can be measured against the truth provided by the film. Rather the discourses are caught up in certain modes of life which are linked to the place of the agent in the productive process. The unemployed workers know that waste is an inevitable part of the capitalist process because they experience it every day in their search for work. Equally the workers in the meat factory know that the class struggle is not finished for they experience the exploitation of their labour in such concrete details as the time that is allowed them to go to the toilet. The film does not *provide this knowledge ready-made in a dominant discourse but* in the contradictions offered, the reader has to produce a meaning for the film (it is quite obvious in films of this sort that the meaning produced will depend on the class-positions of the reader). It is this emphasis on the reader as producer (more obvious in *Tout Va Bien* which is in many ways more Brechtian than *Kuhle Wampe*) which suggests that these films do not just offer a different representation for the subject but a different set of relations to both the fictional material and ' reality '.

Very briefly this change could be characterised as the introduction of time (history) into the very area of representation so that it is included within it. It is no accident that both films end with this same emphasis on time and its concomitant change. ' But who will change the world ' (*Kuhle Wampe*) – ' We must learn to live historically ' (*Tout Va Bien*) – this emphasis on time and change embodied both within the film and in the position offered to the reader suggests that a revolutionary socialist ideology might be different in form as well as content. It also throws into doubt Barthes' thesis that revolutionary art is finally caught in the same space of representation that has persisted for 2,000 years in the West. This monolithic conception of representation ignores the fact that post-Einsteinian physics offers a conception of representation in which both subject and object are no longer caught in fixed positions but caught up in time.   ⌐

It might be thought that this possibility of change, of transformation – in short, of production – built into the subject-object relation (which could no longer be characterised in this simple fashion) simply reduplicates the Hegelian error of final reconciliation between the orders of being and consciousness. But this is not so in so far as this possibility of change built into the relation does not imply the inevitable unfolding of a specific series of changes but simply the possibility of change – an area of possible transformations contained within the relation.

It seems that some such account must be offered if one wishes

to allow the possibility of a revolutionary art. Otherwise it seems inevitable that art can simply be progressive or subversive and Brecht's whole practice would be a marriage of the two, in which subversive effects were mechanically used simply to aid the acceptance of the progressive content of his work.

A definite category: Reactionary art

' It is our metaphysicians of the press, our partisans of " art " who would like more emphasis on " fate " in human processes. For a long time now fate, which was once a sublime notion, has been nothing more than a mediocre received idea: by reconciling himself to his condition, man arrives at that such longed for " transfiguration " and " interiorisation ". It is equally a pure notion of the class struggle: one class " determines " the fate of the other ' (XVIII, 169-70).[18]

One fashionable way of receiving and recuperating Brecht, which has been at work since the beginning of the Cold War, is to see him as a satirist ridiculing his contemporary society and the excesses of capitalism and fascism. This approach negates the productive element in Brecht's work and turns the techniques for the production of alienation effects into pure narcissistic signals of an ' intellectual ' work of ' art '. A very typical example of this vulgarisation and de-politicisation of Brecht can be seen in Lindsay Anderson's O Lucky Man! An explicitly Brechtian film – the loosely connected scenes are counter-pointed by the Alan Price songs – the film pretends to offer a tableau of England in 1973 much as Tout Va Bien attempts to offer a tableau of France in 1972. But whereas in the French film the tableaux are used to reflect the contradictions within the society – the different articulations of reality – in the English film the tableaux are all used to express a stereotyped reality of England which the spectator is invited to enjoy from his superior position. The scenes may seem to be dominant over the reality revealed by the narrative but as the film progresses along its endless development it becomes obvious that the narrative simply confirms the evident truths which are offered to us on the screen. And these truths turn out to be that endless message of the reactionary petit-bourgeois intellectual – that we can do nothing against the relentless and evil progress of society (run as it is by a bunch of omnipotent capitalists with the morality of gangsters) except note our superiority to it. A longer analysis of the film might well be in order were it not for the fact that Walter Benjamin had already written the definitive critique of this particularly impoverished artistic strategy. It is perhaps a testament to the paucity of petit-bourgeois imagination in the era of monopoly capitalism that what Benjamin wrote forty years ago about the satirical poet Erich Kästner can be applied word for word to O Lucky Man! It is for this reason that the Benjamin article is included in this issue on Brecht.

1. SC p 93. For explanation of annotation used for Brecht's works see note 2.
2. If the quotation is from Brecht then I simply give the volume and page number of the German edition in the text and the French page numbers which are taken from the volumes published in 1970 as *Sur le Réalisme* (SR) and *Sur le Cinéma* (SC) in the footnotes. If the piece was included in the recent translations of Brecht in issue 84 of *New Left Review* then I add a third figure after the initials NLR.
3. SR p 98, NLR p 45.
4. George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, London 1967, pp 432-433.
5. SR p 77.
6. Sergei Eisenstein, *The Film Sense*, London 1968, pp 14-15.
7. *ibid* p 20.
8. *ibid* p 37.
9. SR pp 99-100, NLR p 46.
10. SC p 25.
11. Jacques Lacan *Lettres de L'Ecole Freudienne*, vol 1 p 45 (Quoted on p 253 of *Qu'est-ce que le structuralism*, ed F Wahl, Paris 1968).
12. *Screen* v 13 n 3, Autumn 1972.
13. See Roland Barthes ' De l'œuvre au texte ' *Revue d'esthétique* 1971 and *Le Plaisir du texte*, Paris 1973.
14. SR p 101, NLR p 47.
15. SC pp 178-179.
16. In *Lenin and Philosophy and other essays*, NLB, London 1971.
17. This precise locating of the notion of the subject in the seventeenth century can, of course, be contested. Althusser, himself, uses examples from the Christian religion and from the Pentateuch which accords with his view of the category of the subject as eternal within ideology. All I wish to indicate in this passage is that it is not obvious that the subject can be used with the degree of confidence that Althusser assumes.
18. SC p 179.

Left-Wing Melancholy*
   (On Erich Kästner's new book of poems)

Walter Benjamin

Today Kästner's poems are already available in three imposing
volumes.[1] However, anyone wishing to study the character of these
strophes is advised to stick to the form in which they originally
appeared. In books they are too crowded and somewhat stifling,
but they dart through the daily papers like fish in water. If this
water is not always of the cleanest and has quite a lot of refuse
floating in it, all the better for the author, whose poetic minnows
can fatten themselves thereon.
   The popularity of these poems is linked to the rise of a stratum
which took unveiled possession of its economic power positions
and prided itself as none other on the nakedness, the unmasked
character of its economic physiognomy. This is not to say that this
stratum, whose only aim was success, which recognised nothing
else, had now conquered the strongest positions. Its ideal was too
asthmatic for that. It was the ideal of childless agents, parvenus of
insignificant origin, who did not, like financial magnates, provide for
their families over decades, but only for themselves, and that hardly
beyond the end of the season. Who cannot see them – their dreamy
baby eyes behind horn-rimmed spectacles, their broad pale cheeks,
their drawling voices, their fatalism in gesture and mode of
thought? From the beginning, it is to this stratum and to this
stratum alone that the poet has something to say, this stratum
that he flatters, insofar as from dawn to dusk he holds up a mirror
to them, or rather holds it against them. The gaps between his
stanzas are the folds of fat in their necks, his rhymes their thick
lips, his caesurae dimples in their flesh, his full-stops pupils in their
eyes. Subject matter and effect remain restricted to this stratum,
and Kästner is as incapable of striking the dispossessed with his
rebellious accents as he is of touching the industrialists with his
irony. This is because, despite appearances, this lyricism protects
above all the status interests of the middle stratum – agents,
journalists, heads of departments. The hatred it proclaims mean-
while towards the petit bourgeoisie has itself an all too intimate
petit bourgeoisie flavour. On the other hand, it clearly abandons
any striking power against the big bourgeoisie and betrays its
yearning for patronage at last in the heartfelt sigh: ' If only there
were a dozen wise men with a great deal of money.'[2] No wonder
Kästner, in settling accounts with the bankers in a ' Hymn ', is as

obliquely familial as he is obliquely economic when he presents the
night thoughts of a proletarian woman under the title ' A Mother
Strikes the Balance '.³ Ultimately home and income remain the lead-
ing strings by which a better-off class leads the mewling poet.
. This poet is dissatisfied, indeed heavy-hearted. But this heaviness
of heart derives from routine. For to be in a routine means to have
sacrificed one's idiosyncracies, to have forfeited the gift of distaste.
And that makes one heavy-hearted. It is this circumstance that gives
this case a certain similarity with that of Heine. The notes with
which Kästner indents his poems, to give these shiny children's
balls the appearance of rugby balls, are routine. And nothing is
more routine than the irony which, like baking powder, helps to
raise the kneaded dough of private opinion. It is only unfortunate
that his impertinence is as much out of all proportion to the
ideological forces at his disposal as it is to the political ones. Not
least does the grotesque underestimation of the opponent that
underlies these provocations betray how much the position of this
left radical intelligentsia is a lost one. It has little to do with the
labour movement. Rather, as a phenomenon of bourgeois dis-
solution, it is a counterpart to the mimicry of feudalism that the
Kaiserreich admired in the reserve lieutenant.⁴ Left radical publicists
of the stamp of Kästner, Mehring and Tucholsky⁵ are the decayed
bourgeoisie's mimicry of the proletariat. Their function is to give
rise, politically speaking, not to parties but to cliques, literarily
speaking, not to schools but to fashions, economically speaking, not
to producers but to agents. And indeed, for the last fifteen years
this left-wing intelligentsia has been continually the agent of all
spiritual conjunctures, from Activism, via Expressionism to New
Objectivity.⁶ However, its political significance was exhausted by
the transposition of revolutionary reflexes, insofar as they arose in
the bourgeoisie, into objects of distraction, of amusement, which
can be supplied for consumption.
    Thus was Activism able to impose the face of a quasi-classless
sound common sense on the revolutionary dialectic. It was in some
sense the sale week of this intelligentsia's department store.
Expressionism exhibited the revolutionary gesture, the raised arm,
the clenched fist in papier-maché. After this advertising campaign
New Objectivity, from which Kästner's poems spring, was added to
the catalogue. What then does the ' spiritual elite ' discover as it
begins to take stock of its feelings? Those feelings themselves?
They have long since been remaindered. What is left is the empty
spaces where, in dusty heart-shaped velvet trays, the feelings –
nature and love, enthusiasm and humanity – once rested. Now the
hollow forms are absent-mindedly caressed. A know-all irony thinks
it has much more in these supposed stereotypes than in the things
themselves, it makes a great display of its poverty and turns the
yawning emptiness into a celebration. For this is what is new about
this objectivity – it takes as much pride in the traces of former

spiritual goods as the bourgeois does in his material goods. Never have such comfortable arrangements been made in such an uncomfortable situation.

In short, this left-wing radicalism is precisely the attitude to which there is no longer in general any corresponding political action. It is to the left not of this or that tendency; but simply to the left of what is in general possible. For from the beginning all it has in mind is to enjoy itself in a negativistic quiet. The metamorphosis of political struggle from a compulsory decision into an object of pleasure, from a means of production into an article of consumption – that is this literature's latest hit. Kästner, who is a considerable talent, has all its means at his fingertips. By far the most important of these is an attitude expressed even in the titles of many of his poems. Among them are an ' Elegy with Egg ', a ' Chemically Purified Christmas Carol ', ' Suicide in the Mixed Bathing ', the ' Fate of a Stylised Negro ', etc.[7] Why these dislocations? Because criticism and knowledge are ready to intervene; but they would be spoil-sports and should on no condition be allowed to speak. So the poet must gag them, and their desperate convulsions now have the same effect as the tricks of a contortionist, ie, they amuse a wide public, insecure in its taste. In Morgenstern, nonsense was only the obverse of a flight into theosophy.[8] But Kästner's nihilism conceals nothing, as little as a mouth that cannot close for yawning.

Poets early became acquainted with this curious variety of despair: tortured stupidity. For the truly political poetry of the last decades has for the most part hurried on ahead of things as a harbinger. It was in 1912 and 1913 that Georg Heym's poems[9] anticipated the then inconceivable constitution of the masses that came into the open in August 1914, in repellent descriptions of never-glimpsed collectivities: of suicides, of prisoners, of the sick, of sailors or of the insane. In his lines the earth armed itself for its submergence in the red deluge. And long before the Ararat of the Goldmark was the only peak sticking up above the flood, every inch of it besieged by Feeding-Trough, Belly-Liner and Sweet-Tooth, Alfred Lichtenstein,[10] who fell in the first days of the War, had brought into view the sad and flabby figures for which Kästner has found the stereotypes. Now what distinguishes the bourgeois in this early, still pre-expressionist version from the later, post-expressionist one is his eccentricity. Not in vain did Lichtenstein dedicate one of his poems to a clown.[11] The clowning of despair was still deep in the bones of his bourgeois. They had not yet shifted eccentricity outside themselves as an object of urban amusement. They were not yet so totally satiated, nor had they so totally become agents that they did not feel their obscure solidarity with a commodity whose sales crisis is already on the horizon. Then came peace – the collapse of the market for the human commodity with which we have become familiar as unemployment. And the

suicide for which Lichtenstein's poems are propaganda is dumping, the disposal of this commodity at ruinous prices. Kästner's strophes have forgotten all this. Their beat very precisely follows the notes according to which poor rich folk play the blues; they correspond to the mournfulness of the satiated man who can no longer devote all his money to his stomach. Tortured stupidity: this the latest of two millennia of metamorphoses of melancholy.

Kästner's poems are for the higher income bracket, those mournful, melancholy dummies who trample anything or anyone in their path. With the rigidity of their armour, the slowness of their advance, the blindness of their action, they are the rendez-vous that tank and bedbug have made in man. These poems teem with them like a city café after the stock exchange closes. Is it surprising that their function is to reconcile this type to himself and to establish that identity of professional and private life which these men understand by the name ' humanity ', but which is in truth the genuinely bestial, since authentic humanity – under the present conditions – can only arise from a tension between these two poles? In this tension, consciousness and deed are formed, to create it is the task of all political lyricism, and today this task is most strictly fulfilled by Brecht's poems. In Kästner it has to give way to complacency and fatalism. This is the fatalism of those who are most remote from the process of production and whose obscure courting of the state of the market is comparable to the attitude of a man who yields himself up entirely to the inscrutable accidents of his digestion. The rumbling in these lines certainly has more to do with flatulence than with subversion. Constipation and melancholy have always gone together. But since the juices began to dry up in the body social, stuffiness meets us at every turn. Kästner's poems do not improve the atmosphere.

Translator's Notes

1. Erich Kästner: *Herz auf Taille*, Leipzig 1928; *Lärm im Spiegel*, Leipzig 1928; *Ein Mann gibt Auskunft*, Stuttgart 1930. Reprinted in *Gesammelte Schriften* Band I: *Gedichte*, Zürich 1959. A selection of Kästner's poetry in English translation is available under the apt but gruesome title *Let's Face it*, edited Patrick Bridgwater, Jonathon Cape, London 1963. Erich Kästner (b 1899) is most well-known in England for his children's book *Emil and the Detectives* and its sequels, but he was also the writer of occasional verse, novels for adults and journalistic pieces.

2. ' Ach, gäbe es nur ein Dutzend Weise/ mit sehr viel Geld . . .' from ' Ansprache an Millionäre ', *Ein Mann gibt Auskunft, Ges Schr, Bd I*, op cit, pp 176-7.

3. 'Hymnus auf die Bankiers ', *Lärm im Spiegel, ibid*, pp 135-6; ' Eine Mutter zieht Bilanz ', *Lärm im Spiegel, ibid*, pp 105-6.

4. In Wilhelmine Germany, those undergoing higher education, ie, the bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia, could obtain reserve lieutenant-ships after a year's voluntary military service instead of the liability to two years' service and ten in the reserves. Originally introduced in part to lessen the predominance of the aristocracy in the Prussian

army, the institution became a mechanism for inculcating an aristo-
cratic life-style in the bourgeoisie, helping to cement the Junker-
capitalist ruling class bloc in the German Empire.

5. Walter Mehring (b 1896), satirical journalist, song-writer, novelist
and playwright, contributor to *Die Weltbühne*, active in Piscator-
bühne 1928-30, emigrated to USA 1935. Kurt Tucholsky (1890-
1935), journalist and song-writer, contributor from 1912 to *Die
Schaubühne*, later *Die Weltbühne*, editor of the latter 1926-7, other-
wise lived in Paris from 1924 until his death. *Die Weltbühne*,
Mehring and Tucholsky acquired their prominence for their attacks
on the reactionary bias of the judiciary of the Weimar Republic
and their exposure of the secret reconstruction of the German Army.

6. Activism was a movement associated particularly with Kurt Hiller
(1885-1946) and dating from the years of the First World War in
Germany; it called for the 'spiritual elite', ie, intellectuals and artists,
to engage actively in politics, but not in politics as at present institu-
tionalised, but rather to intervene in the name of and in the interests
of culture itself. Literary expressionism is usually regarded today
as a movement of the period 1910-1920 characterised by an extension
of subject-matter to the personal and pathological on the one hand
and to a political messianism on the other, and a breakdown of
poetic and dramatic form in the direction of futurist *parole in
libertà* or of Whitmanesque free verse. Benjamin seems always to
use the term to refer to the later, more public and political phase
of the movement, particularly in the years after the November
revolution; thus, in this essay he describes Heym and Lichtenstein
as pre-expressionist poets, whereas most modern classifications would
refer to them as early expressionists. *Neue Sachlichkeit* or New
Objectivity was a movement in literature and other arts that arose
in Weimar Germany as a reaction to expressionism; it prided itself
on its realism and its more pessimistic side is summed up in the
title to the English selection of Kästner's poems: 'Let's face it'.

7. 'Elegie mit Ei', *Herz auf Taille, Ges Schr* Bd I, *op cit*, pp 94-5;
'Weihnachtslied, chemisch gereinigt', *Herz auf Taille, ibid*, pp 82-3
(English translation 'Christmas Carol (Chemically Purified)', *Let's
Face it*, op cit); 'Selbstmord im Familienbad', *Ein Mann gibt
Auskunft, Ges Schr* Bd I, pp 193-4 (English translation 'Suicide in
"Mixed Bathing"', *Let's Face it*, op cit); 'Schicksal eines stilisierten
Negers', *Ein Mann gibt Auskunft, Ges Schr* Bd I, pp 196-8.

8. Christian Morgenstern (1871-1914), German poet, famous for his
nonsense poetry, especially *Galgenlieder* (Gallows Songs, 1905),
became a follower of Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophical movement
towards the end of his life.

9. Georg Heym (1887-1912), German poet, author of one book of
poems published in his life-time. His poetry is simple in form, but
characterised by a dream- or nightmare-like atmosphere and imagery.

10. Alfred Lichtenstein (1889-1914), German poet and short story
writer, his poetry is characterised by a satirical tone and a desperate
eccentricity of content.

11. 'Die Welt', published in *Dämmerung*, the only collection by Lich-
tenstein printed before his death, now in *Gesammelte Gedichte*, ed
Klaus Kanzog, Zürich 1962, p 61.

Translated by Ben Brewster

Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein*

Roland Barthes

for André Techiné

Let us imagine that an affinity of status and history has linked
mathematics and acoustics since the ancient Greeks. Let us also
imagine that for two or three millennia this effectively Pythagorean
space has been somewhat repressed (Pythagoras is indeed the
eponymous hero of Secrecy). Finally, let us imagine that from the
time of these same Greeks another relationship has been estab-
lished over against the first and has got the better of it, con-
tinually taking the lead in the history of the arts – the relationship
between geometry and theatre. The theatre is precisely that practice
which calculates the place of things *as they are observed*: if I set
the spectacle here, the spectator will see this; if I put it elsewhere,
he will not, and I can avail myself of this masking effect and play
on the illusion it provides. The stage is the line which stands
across the path of the optic pencil, tracing at once the point at
which it is brought to a stop and, as it were, the threshold of its
ramification. Thus is founded – against music (against the text) –
representation.

Representation is not defined directly by imitation: even if one
gets rid of notions of the ' real ', of the ' vraisemblable ', of the
' copy ', there will still be representation for so long as a subject
(author, reader, spectator or voyeur) casts his *gaze* towards a
horizon on which he cuts out the base of a triangle, his eye (or his
mind) forming the apex. The ' Organon of Representation ' (which
it is today becoming possible to write because there are intimations
of *something else*) will have as its dual foundation the sovereignty
of the act of cutting out (*découpage*) and the unity of the subject
of that action. The substance of the various arts will therefore
be of little importance; certainly, theatre and cinema are direct
expressions of geometry (unless, as rarely, they carry out some
research on the voice, on stereophony), but classic (readable)
literary discourse, which has for such a long time now abandoned
prosody, music, is also a representational, geometrical discourse
in that it cuts out segments in order to depict them: to discourse
(the classics would have said) is simply ' to depict the tableau one
has in one's mind '. The scene, the picture, the shot, the cut-out

---

rectangle, here we have the very *condition* that allows us to con-
ceive theatre, painting, cinema, literature, all those arts, that is,
other than music and which could be called *dioptric arts*. (Counter-
proof: nothing permits us to locate the slightest tableau in the
musical text, except by reducing it to a subservience to drama;
nothing permits us to cut out in it the slightest fetish, except by
debasing it through the use of trite melodies.)

As is well known, the whole of Diderot's aesthetics rests on the
identification of theatrical scene and pictorial tableau: the perfect
play is a succession of tableaux, that is, a gallery, an exhibition;
the stage offers the spectator ' as many real tableaux as there are
in the action moments favourable to the painter '. The tableau
(pictorial, theatrical, literary) is a pure cut-out segment with clearly
defined edges, irreversible and incorruptible; everything that sur-
rounds it is banished into nothingness, remains unnamed, while
everything that it admits within its field is promoted into essence,
into light, into view. Such demiurgic discrimination implies high
quality of thought: the tableau is intellectual, it has something to
say (something moral, social) but it also says that it knows how
this must be done; it is simultaneously significant and propae-
deutical, impressive and reflexive, moving and conscious of the
channels of emotion. The epic scene in Brecht, the shot in Eisen-
stein are so many tableaux; they are scenes which are *laid out* (in
the sense in which one says *the table is laid*), which answer per-
fectly to that dramatic unity theorised by Diderot: firmly cut out
(remember the tolerance shown by Brecht with regard to the Italian
curtain-stage, his contempt for indefinite theatres – open air,
theatre in the round), erecting a meaning but manifesting the pro-
duction of that meaning, they accomplish the coincidence of the
visual and the ideal *découpages*. Nothing separates the shot in
Eisenstein from the picture by Greuze (except, of course, their
respective projects: in the latter moral, in the former social);
nothing separates the scene in epic theatre from the Eisenstein
shot (except that in Brecht the tableau is offered to the spectator
for his criticism, not for his adherence).

Is the tableau then (since it arises from a process of cutting
out) a fetish-object? Yes, at the level of the ideal meaning (Good,
Progress, the Cause, the triumph of the just History); no, at that
of its composition. Or rather, more exactly, it is the very *com-
position* that allows the displacement of the point at which the
fetish comes to a halt and thus the setting further back of the
loving effect of the *découpage*. Once again, Diderot is for us the
theoretician of this dialectic of desire; in the article on ' Com-
position ', he writes:

' A well-composed picture (*tableau*) is a whole contained under a
single point of view, in which the parts work together to one end
and form by their mutual correspondence a unity as real as that of

the members of the body of an animal; so that a piece of painting 35
made up of a large number of figures thrown at random onto the
canvas, with neither proportion, intelligence nor unity, no more
deserves to be called a *true composition* than scattered studies of
legs, nose and eyes on the same cartoon deserve to be called a
portrait or even a *human figure.*'

Thus is the body expressly introduced into the idea of the tableau,
but it is the whole body that is so introduced – the organs, grouped
together and as though held in cohesion by the magnetic force of
the segmentation, function in the name of a transcendence, that
of the *figure*, which receives the full fetishistic load and becomes
the sublime substitute of meaning: it is this meaning that is
fetishised. (Doubtless there would be no difficulty in finding in
post-Brechtian theatre and post-Eisensteinian cinema *mises-en-
scène* marked by the dispersion of the tableau, the pulling to pieces
of the ' composition ', the setting in movement of the ' partial
organs ' of the human figure, in short the holding in check of the
metaphysical meaning of the work – but then also of its political
meaning; or, at least, the carrying over of this meaning towards
another politics).

<center>*   *   *</center>

Brecht indicated clearly that in epic theatre (which proceeds by
successive tableaux) all the burden of meaning and pleasure bears
on each scene, not on the whole. At the level of the play itself,
there is no development, no maturation; there is indeed an ideal
meaning (given straight in every tableau), but there is no final
meaning, nothing but a series of segmentations each of which
possesses a sufficient demonstrative power. The same thing in
Eisenstein: the film is a contiguity of episodes, each one absolutely
meaningful, aesthetically perfect, and the result is a cinema by
vocation anthological, itself holding out to the fetishist, with
dotted lines, the piece for him to cut out and take away to enjoy
(isn't it said that in some *cinémathèque* or other a piece of film is
missing from the copy of *Battleship Potemkin* – the scene with the
baby's pram, of course –, it having been cut off and stolen lovingly
like a lock of hair, a glove or an item of women's underwear?)
The primary force of Eisenstein is due to the fact that *no image is
boring*, you are not obliged to wait for the next in order to under-
stand and be delighted; it is a question not of a dialectic (that time
of the patience required for certain pleasures) but of a continuous
jubilation made up of a summation of perfect instants.

   Naturally, Diderot had thought of this perfect instant (and had
given it thought). In order to tell a story, the painter has only an
instant at his disposal, the instant he is going to immobilise on
the canvas, and he must thus choose it well, assuring it in advance
of the greatest possible yield of meaning and pleasure. Necessarily
total, this instant will be artificial (unreal; this is not a realist

art), a hieroglyph in which can be read at a single glance (at one grasp, if we think in terms of theatre and cinema) the present, the past and the future; that is, the historical meaning of the represented action. This crucial instant, totally concrete and totally abstract, is what Lessing subsequently calls (in the *Laocoon*) the *pregnant moment*. Brecht's theatre, Eisenstein's cinema are series of pregnant moments: when Mother Courage bites on the coin offered by the recruiting sergeant and, as a result of this brief interval of distrust, loses her son, she demonstrates at once her past as tradeswoman and the future that awaits her – all her children dead in consequence of her money-making blindness. When (in *The General Line*) the peasant woman lets her skirt be ripped up for material to help in repairing the tractor, the gesture bears the weight of a history: its pregnancy brings together the past victory (the tractor bitterly won from bureaucratic incompetence), the present struggle and the effectiveness of solidarity. The pregnant moment is just this presence of all the absences (memories, lessons, promises) to whose rhythm History becomes both intelligible and desirable.

In Brecht, it is the *social gestus* which takes up the idea of the pregnant moment. What then is a *social gestus* (how much irony has reactionary criticism poured on this Brechtian concept, one of the clearest and most intelligent that dramatic theory has ever produced!)? It is a gesture or set of gestures (but never a gesticulation) in which a whole social situation can be read. Not every *gestus* is social: there is nothing social in the movements a man makes in order to brush off a fly; but if this same man, poorly dressed, is struggling against guard-dogs, the *gestus* becomes social. The action by which the canteen-woman tests the genuineness of the money offered is a social *gestus;* as again is the excessive flourish with which the bureaucrat of *The General Line* signs his official papers. This kind of social *gestus* can be traced even in language itself. A language can be *gestual*, says Brecht, when it indicates certain attitudes that the speaker adopts towards others: ' If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out ' is more gestual than ' Pluck out the eye that offends thee ' because the order of the sentence and the asyndeton that carries it along refer to a prophetic and vengeful situation. Thus rhetorical forms may be *gestual*, which is why it is pointless to criticise Eisenstein's art (as also that of Brecht) for being ' formalising ' or ' aesthetic ': form, aesthetic, rhetoric can be socially responsible if they are handled with deliberation. Representation (since that is what we are concerned with) has inescapably to reckon with the social *gestus;* as soon as one ' represents ' (cuts out, marks off the tableau and so discontinues the overall totality), it must be decided whether the gesture is social or not (when it refers not to a particular society, but to Man).

What does the actor do in the tableau (the scene, the shot)?

Since the tableau is the presentation of an ideal meaning, the actor must present the very knowledge of the meaning, for the latter would not be ideal if it did not bring with it its own machination. This knowledge which the actor must demonstrate – by an unfamiliar supplement – is, however, neither his human knowledge (his tears must not refer simply to the state of feeling of the Downcast Man) nor his knowledge as actor (he must not show that he knows how to act well). The actor must prove that he is not enslaved to the spectator (bogged down in ' reality ', in ' humanity '), that he guides meaning towards its ideality – a sovereignty of the actor, master of meaning, which is evident in Brecht, since he theorised it under the term ' distanciation '. It is no less evident in Eisenstein (at least in the author of *The General Line* which is my example here), and this not as a result of a ceremonial, ritual art – the kind of art called for by Brecht – but through the insistance of the social *gestus* which never ceases to stamp the actors' gestures (fists clenching, hands gripping tools, peasants reporting at the bureaucrat's reception-desk). Nevertheless, it is true that in Eisenstein, as in Greuze (for Diderot an exemplary painter), the actor does sometimes adopt expressions of the most pathetic quality, a pathos which can appear to be very little ' distanced '; but distanciation is a fundamentally Brechtian method, vital to Brecht because he represents a tableau for the spectator to criticise; in the other two, the actor does not necessarily have to distance: what he has to present is an ideal meaning and it is sufficient therefore that he ' bring out ' the production of this value, that he render it tangible, intellectually visible, by the very excess of the versions he gives it; his expression then signifies an idea – which is why it is excessive –, not some natural quality. All this is a far cry from the facial affectations of the Actors' Studio, the much praised ' restraint ' of which has no other meaning than its contribution to the personal glory of the actor (witness in this respect Brando's grimacings in *The Last Tango in Paris*).

* * *

Does the tableau have a subject (a topic)? Nowise; it has a meaning, not a subject. The meaning begins with the social *gestus* (with the pregnant moment); outside of the *gestus*, there is only vagueness, insignificance.

' In a way,' writes Brecht, ' subjects always have a certain naivety, they are somewhat lacking in qualities. Empty, they are in some sort sufficient to themselves. Only the social *gestus* (criticism, strategy, irony, propaganda, etc.) introduces the human element.'

To which Diderot adds (if one may put it like that): the creation of the painter or the dramatist lies not in the choice of a subject but in the choice of the pregnant moment, in the choice of the tableau. It matters little, after all, that Eisenstein took his ' subjects ' from the past history of Russia and the Revolution and

not – ' as he should have done ' (so say his censors today) – from
the present of the construction of socialism (except in the case of
The General Line); battleship or Tsar are of minor importance,
are merely vague and empty ' subjects ', what alone counts is the
gestus, the critical demonstration of the gesture, its inscription –
to whatever period it may belong – in a text the social machina-
tion of which is clearly visible: the subject neither adds nor sub-
tracts anything. How many films are there now ' about ' drugs, in
which drugs are the ' subject '? But this is a subject that is hollow;
without any social *gestus*, drugs are insignificant, or rather, their
significance is simply that of an essential nature – vague, empty,
eternal: ' drugs lead to impotence ' (*Trash*), ' drugs lead to suicide '
(*Absences répétées*). The subject is a false articulation: why this
subject in preference to another? The work only begins with the
tableau, when the meaning is set into the gesture and the co-
ordination of gestures. Take *Mother Courage*: you may be certain
of a misunderstanding if you think that its ' subject ' is the Thirty
Years War, or even the denunciation of war in general; its *gestus*
is not there, but in the blindness of the tradeswoman who believes
herself to live off war only, in fact, to die of it; even more, the
gestus lies in the *view* that I, spectator, have of this blindness.

    In the theatre, in the cinema, in traditional literature, things are
always seen *from somewhere*. Here we have the geometrical
foundation of representation: a fetishist subject is required to cut
out the tableau. This point of meaning is always the Law: law of
society, law of struggle, law of meaning. Thus all militant art can-
not but be representational, legal. In order for representation to be
really bereft of origin and exceed its geometrical nature without
ceasing to be representation, the price that must be paid is enor-
mous – no less than death. In Dreyer's *Vampyr*, as a friend points
out, the camera moves from house to cemetery recording *what
the dead man sees*: such is the extreme limit at which representa-
tion is outplayed; the spectator can no longer take up any posi-
tion, for he cannot identify his eye with the closed eyes of the
dead man; the tableau has no point of departure, no support, it
gapes open. Everything that goes on before this limit is reached
(and this is the case of the work of Brecht and Eisenstein) can
only be legal: in the long run, it is the Law of the Party which
cuts out the epic scene, the filmic shot; it is this Law which looks,
frames, focusses, enunciates. Once again Eisenstein and Brecht
rejoin Diderot (promoter of bourgeois domestic tragedy, as his two
successors were to be the promoters of a socialist art). Diderot dis-
tinguished in painting major practices, those whose force is cath-
artic, aiming at the ideality of meaning, and minor practices, those
which are purely imitative, anecdotal – the difference between
Greuze and Chardin. In other words, in a period of ascendency
every physics of art (Chardin) must be crowned with a metaphysics
(Greuze). In Brecht, in Eisenstein, Chardin and Greuze coexist

(more complex, Brecht leaves it to his public to be the Greuze of the Chardin he sets before their eyes). How could art, in a society that has not yet found peace, cease to be metaphysical? that is, significant, readable, representational? fetishist? When are we to have music, the Text?

*   *   *

It seems that Brecht knew hardly anything of Diderot (barely, perhaps, the *Paradoxe sur le comédien*). He it is, however, who authorises, in a quite contingent way, the tripartite conjuncture that has just been proposed. Round about 1937, Brecht had the idea of founding a *Diderot Society*, a place for pooling theatrical experiments and studies – doubtless because he saw in Diderot, in addition to the figure of a great materialist philosopher, a man of the theatre whose theory aimed at dispensing equally pleasure and instruction. Brecht drew up the programme for this Society and produced a tract which he contemplated sending out. To whom? To Piscator, to Jean Renoir, to Eisenstein.

translated by Stephen Heath

please write for a

february 1972 35p

films and filming

PLAYBOY IN A MONASTERY interview with John Boorman □ THE WESTERN HERO
PUBLIC MADNESS AND PRIVATE LUNACY □ SHOOT OUT IN DEAN STREET
PICTURE PREVIEWS MACBETH □ DELIVERANCE □ A CLOCKWORK ORANGE
GOING HOME □ TCHAIKOVSKY □ THX-1138 □ ONCE AND FOR ALWAYS

free *introductory* copy

Kuhle Wampe or Who Does the World Belong To?
(Kuhle Wampe oder Wem gehört die Welt?)

Scenario: Bertolt Brecht, Ernst Ottwald
Music: Hanns Eisler
Director: S Th Dudow
Producers: Georg M Höllering, Robert Scharfenberg
Photography: Günther Krampf
Sound: Tobis Melofilm System Tobis-Klangfilm, recorded by
  Kroschke Michelis, edited by Peter Meyrowitz
Architects: Robert Scharfenberg, C P Haacker
Musical direction: Josef Schmid
Band: Lewis Ruth
Main actors: Hertha Thiele, Martha Wolter, Lilli Schönborn,
  Ernst Busch, Adolf Fischer, Max Sablotzki, Alfred Schäfer
Ballads: Helene Weigel, Ernst Busch
Praesens Film GmbH, Berlin, 1932

Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956), German poet and playwright, emi-
grated 1933, settling in Denmark, to Sweden in 1939, Finland
1940, via the USSR to the USA 1941, returned to Europe in 1947,
settled in the DDR in 1948. Various film projects in the 1920's
came to nothing, *Kuhle Wampe* made in 1931, worked in Holly-
wood on a number of filmscripts including Fritz Lang's *Hangmen
Also Die* (1942).
Ernst Ottwald (or Ottwalt, 1901-1943), German writer, member
of the Freikorps Halle 1918-19, his experience as a miner and
metal-worker led him to join the KPD and the League of Prole-
tarian-Revolutionary Writers (BPRS), exponent of a form of novel
consisting of a montage of factual material, emigrated to the
USSR in 1933, co-editor of *International Literature* until 1936,
arrested and sentenced to death for espionage, executed in 1943,
rehabilitated 1953.
Hanns Eisler (1898-1962), German composer, brother of Gerhart
Eisler and Ruth Fischer, pupil of Arnold Schönberg in Vienna,
active in workers' choirs and orchestras there and in Berlin from
1924, member of the KPD 1926, collaboration with Brecht in the
didactic play *Die Massnahme*, 1930, in *Kuhle Wampe* 1931, *Die
Mutter* 1931, emigrated 1933 settling in the USA in 1938, teach-
ing at the New School for Social Research, New York, and at
UCLA, composed much film music, eg, the music for Fritz Lang's
Hangmen Also Die (1942) and Douglas Sirk's *A Scandal in Paris*
(1945), author (with Th W-Adorno) of *Composing for the Films*

42   (London, 1951), returned to Vienna 1948, settling in Berlin (DDR) 1950.

Slatan Th Dudow (1903-63), Bulgarian-German director, active in Bulgarian workers' movement, emigrated to Berlin 1922, worked in the theatre, notably in the Piscatorbühne 1927-9, met Brecht 1929, collaborated with him in the *Badener Lehrstück vom Einverständnis* 1929, *Die Massnahme* 1930 and *Die Mutter* 1931, directed film documentaries and agitational films 1929-30, directed *Kuhle Wampe* 1931, emigrated 1933 to France, worked in theatre there, returned to Germany in 1945, worked for DEFA in Berlin. Films include *Rotsport marschiert* (1930), *Wie lebt der Berliner Arbeiter?* (1930), *Seifenblasen* (1931-4) and many films since 1945. For biofilmography see Yves Aubry: *Slatan Dudow, Anthologie du cinéma* no 58, Paris, Oct 1970.

1. In the summer of 1931, thanks to the utilisation of particularly favourable circumstances (the dissolution of a film company,[1] the willingness of a private individual to invest not too great a sum of money together with his theatrical abilities in a film, and so on), we had the possibility of making a rather small film. Impressed by our recent experiences in the *Dreigroschenprozess* (Threepenny Lawsuit),[2] we insisted on a contract by which we, the makers, became the authors in the legal sense, for the first time in film history or so we were told. This cost us our right to the usual guaranteed payment, but it gained us otherwise unattainable freedoms in the work. Our small company consisted of two scenarists, a director, a musician, a producer and last but not least, a lawyer.[3] Naturally, the organisation of the work was a much greater effort for us than the (artistic) work itself, ie, we came more and more to treat organisation as an essential component of artistic labour. This was only possible because the work as a whole was political work. In the very last moment when the work was all but complete in all its moments and nineteen twentieths of the film had been shot and considerable sums expended, credits laid claim to, one of our creditors, a firm with a monopoly on equipment we needed, announced to us that it had no interest in the release of our film and would rather write off the already credited fees than enable us to carry on, because the expectations of the press, which did not coincide with those of the paying public,[4] would probably be raised by films of a higher quality, and because the film could not be commercial since Communism was no longer a threat in Germany. On the other hand, other firms refused to give any credit since they feared what censorship might do to the film, the censorship of the cinema-owners themselves more than the censorship of the State. The latter is anyway only an expression of the former, just as in general the State is not a third, superordinate non-partisan instance, but the executor of big business and thus biased to one side.

2. Description of the Film

The sound film *Kuhle Wampe or Who does the World Belong to?* consists of four independent parts which are divided by self-contained pieces of music accompanied by images of apartment blocks, factories and landscapes. The first part, based on a real incident, shows the suicide of an unemployed youth in those summer months in which emergency decrees (*Notverordnungen*)[5]

---

were made the grounds for increasing the distress (*Not*) of the lower strata: unemployment pay was reduced for young people. The young man in question, before he threw himself from the window, took off his watch so as not to destroy it. The beginning of this part shows the search for work as itself – work. The second part shows the eviction of the family as a result of a legal verdict (which applies the words ' their own fault '* to the misfortunes of the family who can no longer pay the rent). The family moves outside the city, seeking refuge in the tent of a boyfriend of the daughter's in a camp site called Kuhle Wampe. (For a time the film was to be called *Ante Portas*.)

There the girl gets pregnant and under pressure from the lumpen-petit bourgeois relations dominant in the site (a kind of ' possession ' of the land and the payment of a small dole create peculiar social forms), the young couple become engaged. The engagement is broken off on the initiative of the girl. In the third part, proletarian athletics competitions are shown. They take place on a mass scale and are brilliantly organised. They are thoroughly political in character: the recreation of the masses has a militant character. More than 3,000 worker-athletes from branches of the *Fichtewandrer*[6] participated in this section. Among the athletes the two young people from the second part are briefly shown: with the help of a girl friend, the girl has raised the money for an abortion and the couple have dropped the idea of marriage. The fourth part shows people homeward bound in a railway carriage discussing a newspaper article about the destruction of Brazilian coffee to maintain prices.

3. On the poems[7]

The ' Song of the Homeless ' was dropped for fear of a general ban, the ' Appeal ' for technical reasons. The ' Solidarity Song ' was sung by some 3,000 worker-athletes. The ' Song for Athletics Competitions ' is sung by a solo voice during the motorbike and boat races.

The poem ' On Nature in Springtime ', performed by a solo voice, connects three walks together of the lovers. This part of the film was projected to proletarian athletes during production and criticised by them because of the nudity in it.

(Signed) Brecht. Dudow. Höllering. Kaspar. Ottwald. Scharfenberg.

---

* This formula – 'their own fault ' – in the eviction judgment is one of those already shattered pillars that ingloriously witness to past splendour. Those who use this infamous phrase do not realise that by applying the concept ' innocent' to themselves and the concept ' guilty' to those robbed by them of their homes, they obliterate the concept of ' guilt' once and for all. And this is in fact what is happening here!

Bertolt Brecht

The film *Kuhle Wampe* was made by the young director S Th
Dudow under great material difficulties. Most of the visual
material had to be shot at the utmost speed, a quarter of the
whole film in two days, for example. The only assistance we
obtained came from the Communist sports leagues, which on
certain days . . . organised 4,000 worker-athletes for us. Because
of the continuing difficulties of obtaining financial means, the
making of the film took more than a year, and meanwhile condi-
tions in Germany (fasciscisation, increasing acuteness of unem-
ployment, etc) developed at a rapid rate. When the film was
ready it was immediately banned by the censors.[8] The content and
purpose of the film emerges most clearly from a presentation of
the grounds on which the censors banned it.

The film represented the weary and listless adaptation of certain
strata of workers to the ' marsh '. The Ministry of the Interior[9]
declared: this is an attack on Social Democracy. But such an
attack is banned, just like an attack on the Church, etc, ie, on
institutions that maintain the State.[10]

The film represented the fate of an unemployed youth, who
does not manage to make contact with militant labour and who
is driven to his death by the reduction of unemployment assist-
ance for the young demanded in Brüning's emergency decrees.
The Ministry of the Interior declared: this is an attack on the
President[11] who signed the emergency decree in question and who
was here denounced for a lack of sympathy with the sufferings of
the working class. The film represented the activity of the great
Communist worker sports leagues, to which some 200,000 workers
belong in Germany and which put workers' sports at the service
of the class struggle. . . .

A Small Contribution to the Theme of Realism*

Bertolt Brecht

It is not often that the real effectivity of artistic methods can be
successfully tested. Mostly one experiences at best agreement (' Yes,
you show the way it is with us '), or that one has given an
' initiative ' in some direction or other. Here is a little test which
turned out happily.

I had made the film *Kuhle Wampe* with Slatan Dudow and
Hanns Eisler, a film which depicted the desperate situation of the
unemployed in Berlin. It was a montage of a few fairly self-
contained parts. The first showed the suicide of a young un-
employed worker. The censors made great difficulties which led

---

* Written sometime in the 1930's.

Bertolt Brecht

The film *Kuhle Wampe* was made by the young director S Th
Dudow under great material difficulties. Most of the visual
material had to be shot at the utmost speed, a quarter ˉof the
whole film in two days, for example. The only assistance we
obtained came from the Communist sports leagues, which on
certain days . . . organised 4,000 worker-athletes for us. Because
of the continuing difficulties of obtaining financial means, the
making of the film took more than a year, and meanwhile condi-
tions in Germany (fasciscisation, increasing acuteness of unem-
ployment, etc) developed at a rapid rate. When the film was
ready it was immediately banned by the censors.[8] The content and
purpose of the film emerges most clearly from a presentation of
the grounds on which the censors banned it.

The film represented the weary and listless adaptation of certain
strata of workers to the ' marsh '. The Ministry of the Interior[9]
declared: this is an attack on Social Democracy. But such an
attack is banned, just like an attack on the Church, etc, ie, on
institutions that maintain the State.[10]

The film represented the fate of an unemployed youth, who
does not manage to make contact with militant labour and who
is driven to his death by the reduction of unemployment assist-
ance for the young demanded in Brüning's emergency decrees.
The Ministry of the Interior declared: this is an attack on the
President[11] who signed the emergency decree in question and who
was here denounced for a lack of sympathy with the sufferings of
the working class. The film represented the activity of the great
Communist worker sports leagues, to which some 200,000 workers
belong in Germany and which put workers' sports at the service
of the class struggle. . . .

A Small Contribution to the Theme of Realism*

Bertolt Brecht

It is not often that the real effectivity of artistic methods can be
successfully tested. Mostly one experiences at best agreement (' Yes,
you show the way it is with us '), or that one has given an
' initiative ' in some direction or other. Here is a little test which
turned out happily.

I had made the film *Kuhle Wampe* with Slatan Dudow and
Hanns Eisler, a film which depicted the desperate situation of the
unemployed in Berlin. It was a montage of a few fairly self-
contained parts. The first showed the suicide of a young un-
employed worker. The censors made great difficulties which led

---

* Written sometime in the 1930's.

to a meeting, with the censor and the lawyers of the film company.[12]

The censor proved himself a clever man. He said: ' No-one disputes your right to portray a suicide. Suicides happen. Further, you can even show the suicide of an unemployed worker. That also happens. I see no reason to hush it up, gentlemen. I do however object to the way you have depicted the suicide of your unemployed worker. It is not in the interest of the public which . I have to defend. I am sorry, but I must make an *artistic* objection.'

We said (offended): ' ? '

He went on: ' Yes, it will surprise you, but I object on the grounds that your portrayal does not seem to me *human* enough. You have not depicted a human being, but rather, let us admit it, a type. Your unemployed worker is not a real individual, not a man of flesh and blood, different from all other men, with particular worries, particular pleasures, ultimately with a particular fate. He is very superficially portrayed, as artists pardon me this strong expression for the fact that *we learn too little about him,* but the consequences are of a *political* nature, and this forces me to protest against the release of your film. Your film has the tendency to present suicide as typical, as a matter not of this or that (morbidly inclined) individual, but as the fate of a whole class! It is your opinion that society induces young men to commit suicide by refusing them the possibility to work. And you really do not bother to go on to indicate what advice should be given to the unemployed to bring about a change in this situation. No, gentlemen, you haven't behaved as artists, not in this case. You did not try to present a single, shocking case, something no-one could have objected to.'

We sat disconcerted. We had the unpleasant impression that we had been seen through. Eisler sadly wiped his glasses, Dudow curled up as if in pain. Despite my dislike for speeches I stood up and made one. I strongly denied the accusations. I cited individual features we had given our young unemployed worker. For example, the fact that before ·he hurled himself from the window, he took his wristwatch off. I claimed that this purely human feature alone had given us the inspiration for the entire scene. That we did in fact show other unemployed workers who did not commit suicide — to wit, 4,000 of them, for we had also filmed a large workers' sports club. I protested against the monstrous suggestion that we had not acted artistically, and hinted at the possibility of a press campaign. I was not ashamed to claim that my artistic reputation was at stake.

The censor was not afraid to discuss the details of the presentation. Our lawyers looked on in astonishment as a regular artistic debate unfolded. The censor emphasised the fact that we had lent the suicide act a decidedly demonstrative character. He used the

expression ' somewhat mechanical '. Dudow stood up and excitedly demanded that a medical opinion be sought. This would prove that actions of this kind often create a mechanical impression. The censor shook his head. ' That may be,' he said stubbornly. ' But you must admit that your suicide avoids everything in the way of impulsiveness. The spectator hardly wants to stop him, so to speak, as should happen in an artistic, human, warm-hearted presentation. Good God, the actor behaves just as if he was showing how to peel cucumbers! '

We had a hard time getting our film passed. Going out of the building, we did not hide our esteem for the acute censor. He had penetrated far deeper into the substance of our artistic aims than our most well-wishing critics. He had read us a little lecture on realism. From the standpoint of the police.

Editors' Notes

1. Prometheus-Film GmbH, a subsidiary of International Workers' Aid (Mezhrabpom), distributed Soviet films in Europe and produced and distributed agitational and fiction films in Germany. Prometheus-Film collapsed as a result of the bank crash of July 1931 and was dissolved in January 1932. The film was taken over by Praesens-Film GmbH on condition that actors, script-writers, producers and director forfeit their fees.

2. *Threepenny Lawsuit.* In 1929 Brecht and Weill signed a contract with Nero-Film AG for a film version of their Singspiel *The Threepenny Opera* on condition that they controlled scenario and music. In 1930 Brecht submitted an outline *Die Beule* (The Welt) closer to the later *Threepenny Novel* than to the original Singspiel; this was rejected by Nero-Film, whereupon Brecht and Weill sued. The case was heard in October 1930, and though Weill won his action, Brecht lost; he then settled with Nero-Film rather than appeal. The film was then scripted by Béla Balázs and directed by Pabst (1931). Brecht wrote an account of the lawsuit under the title *Der Dreigroschenprozess* which was published in the third part of his *Versuche* (1931): ' The Threepenny Lawsuit was an attempt to obtain justice on the basis of a contract. The study of it indicates a new critical method, the sociological experiment ' (Bertolt Brecht: *Versuche* 1-12, reprint by Suhrkamp Verlag, Berlin and Frankfurt 1959, p 144).

3. Bertolt Brecht and Ernst Ottwald; Slatan Dudow; Hanns Eisler; Robert Scharfenberg; Kaspar (?) respectively.

4. Cf *Der Dreigroschenprozess* III 3 : ' *Man kann den Publikumsgeschmack verbessern,' Versuche* reprint op cit, pp 261-4.

5. *Notverordnungen.* According to the Weimar Constitution, the President could rule by emergency decree unless vetoed by the Reichstag (para 48), and also had the power to dissolve the Reichstag (para 25). In March 1930 SPD representative Müller's Broad Coalition cabinet fell through disagreement over the possible reduction of unemployment benefit or increase of social insurance contributions. In July the Reichstag rejected the budget proposed by the new Chancellor, the Centre Party representative Brüning, and also vetoed his subsequent emergency decrees to the same effect. The Reichstag was thereupon dissolved, but the elections of September did not resolve the issue. Henceforth the SPD abstained from

vetoing Brüning's emergency decrees.

6. In December 1930 German workers' athletes club formed a Struggle Union for Red Sports Unity, which by October 1931 had 2,100 branches with 110,000 members and close relations to a further 1,300 clubs. In January 1931, 1,000 delegates representing 25,000 Berlin worker athletes formed the Arbeitersportsverein Fichte (Pine-tree worker sports league), with two KPD members on the leadership.

7. Of the poems mentioned, the 'Lied der Obdachlosen', the 'Solidaritätslied', the 'Sportlied' and 'Das Frühjahr' can be found in Bertolt Brecht: *Gesammelte Werke* VIII, 366-70. The *Svendborger Gedichte*, a collection of poems written between 1933 and 1938 contains a poem sequence entitled 'Appell' IX, 686-8.

8. Submitted to the Film Inspection Office (Filmprüfstelle) in March 1932, the film was shown to officials of the Ministry of the Interior (Minister General Wilhelm Groener) who recommended its banning, which recommendation was accepted by the Film Inspection Office on March 31st; two dissenting officials demanded a further hearing in the presence of the makers and invited experts in the Higher Film Inspection Office. This hearing took place on April 9th, resulting in a confirmation of the ban. After a protest campaign in the press against the ban, Praesens-Film re-submitted a slightly cut version to the Film Inspection Office which, on April 21st, allowed the film, subject to further cuts, for exhibition to adults only; the Chairman, Regierungsrat Zimmermann, protested against this decision but withdrew his objection on April 25th. After a first performance in mid-May in Moscow, the film was released in Berlin on May 30th.

9. As explained in note 8, the Film Inspection Office banned the film on the advice of 'experts' from the Ministry of the Interior, Oberregierungsrat Erbe at the first hearing, Dr Haentzschel, Ministerialdirigent in the Ministry, at the second.

10. One of the extra cuts demanded at the third hearing was of a sequence showing nude bathing on a Sunday morning by worker athletes. The cut was demanded because church bells could be heard in the background, and, the censors claimed, this could be construed as an attack on the church.

11. The text has *Gerichtspräsident* (judge), but *Reichspräsident* (as referred to in these terms by the Oberregiersungsrat Erbe) must surely be meant.

12. Brecht, Dudow and Ottwald were present at the second hearing before the Higher Film Inspection Office on April 9th, at which hearing Praesens-Film were legally represented by Dr Otto Landsberg and Dr Dienstag.

translations by Ben Brewster and Keith Tribe

James Pettifer

The following remarks concerning the 1931-2 Brecht/Ottwald/
Dudow/Eisler film *Kuhle Wampe* are not primarily intended to
constitute an attempted reading of the film, but to indicate some
of the historical determinations on which such a reading can be
based and to suggest certain nodal points where attention should
be focussed. It rests on the following premises: (a) that the value
and importance of indicating the historical determinations is
acknowledged. It could be said that all that is involved is a
demystification of some vague and unsatisfactory kind. In fact the
film is rarely seen and has no established audience to encrust it
ideologically. It has never attained the lasting popularity of the
early films of Pudovkin or Eisenstein, although it at first might
appear to have the attraction of the tradition of early Soviet films.

(b) That these determinations do not simply consist of the
dominant economic and political factors of the day but in par-
ticular involve a specific ideological development – viz: the
developing hegemony of the workers during the world economic
crisis and the response to this development from the left-bourgeois
intellectuals in the sphere of artistic production.

(c) That little developed Marxist theory existed for progressive
artists working in film at this time in these conditions and con-
sequently they were open to petit bourgeois influences of various
kinds. In the milieu in which *Kuhle Wampe* was developed, such
influences mainly took the form of ultra-left utopian idealism about
the nature of the working class that supported the KPD. To some
extent the makers of *Kuhle Wampe* were distanced from this
milieu; Brecht was not a member of the KPD and at this time he
and Dudow were participating in Korsch's seminar in discussions
about a series of texts designed by Korsch to contradict the KPD's
positions on Marxism. The sociologist Sternberg describes Brecht
at this time as rejecting the Third Period line and highly critical of
the USSR.

(d) That as far as the film is of interest re Brecht's participation
in it, it was marginal to his central activity as a poet and play-
wright in the later years of the Weimar Republic. The theatre had
a cultural centrality at that time which the cinema did not possess.
Although Brecht was deeply interested in the cinema, especially in
the mass character of its operations, it was difficult for him to
work in such an intensely capitalist-dominated film industry as
existed in Germany in the '20s. Furthermore, the theatre in which
he began his career was closely impregnated with the traditional

50   literary culture (witness his long-standing collaborations with the
     novelist Feuchtwanger).
        (e) That Brecht's concept of the *gest* or social attitude (*Haltung*)
     is an adequate indicator of the nodal elements in *Kuhle Wampe*.

Germany in the World Economic Crisis

After the Reichstag elections of May 20, 1928, President Hindenburg
called upon the Social Democrats led by Hermann Müller to form
a government. The largest single party in the Assembly, the SPD,
had increased its strength from 131 to 153 seats. Further left,
the KPD increased its representation from forty-five to fifty-four
seats. The centre, the Nationalists and right-wing clerical parties
generally held their positions while losing a few seats to the left.
The Nazi's seats fell from fourteen to twelve. In a situation where
a drift to the left seemed to be taking place, Müller formed an
unstable coalition dependent on Nationalist support. The 6th World
Congress of the Comintern took place in the summer of 1928 and
established a new policy of great importance for Germany, for-
bidding the KPD from co-operation with the reformist SPD and
considering the latter to be in an objective alliance with the Nazis.
Efforts were made to set up new Red trade unions and to drive all
SPD functionaries from mass organisations. Although this 'Third
Period' is now widely regarded as profoundly ultra-leftist and
sectarian, a number of points should be made in defence of a
policy that appeared to provide a coherent strategy for political
advance to many German Marxists at the time. For instance, the
SPD demanded loyalty to a state headed by world-war militarist
Hindenburg. The Social Democrats were in coalition with some
deeply reactionary bourgeois politicians, especially in the clerical
Centre Party and the Bavarian People's party. The state machine
was increasingly controlled by pro-monarchist bureaucrats and
bolstered by monarchist officers who plotted and worked in para-
military organisations to destroy its democratic provisions. Most
of all, from the point of view of the KPD rank and file, the police
forces generally controlled by the SPD appeared to discriminate
against all left-wing radicals while turning a blind eye to many
Nazi activities. This was exemplified by the Berlin massacre in May
1928 when the Social Democrat controlled police force opened
fire on a banned May Day demonstration, killing thirty-one people
and wounding hundreds more.[2]
        The fall in electoral support for the Nazis and the right generally
in the 1928 elections did not for long remain an accurate reflection
of political developments. The agreement of the Government coali-
tion to the Young plan in June 1929 enabled a mobilisation of
reactionary forces to take place around the war reparations issue.
The Young plan sought to organise the withdrawal of Allied occupa-
tion forces and to re-establish Germany's exclusive responsibility
for its own finances and economy. The price demanded by the

victorious imperialist powers was the payment of reparations
until 1982. Demagogic right-wing politicians, especially the news-
paper magnate and UFA film company owner Hugenberg (now
chairman of the Nationalist party), exploited patriotic sentiment
with the eager support of Hitler. A referendum on the plan was
forced which enabled a mobilisation and unification of the right
to take place. Although lost by a large majority, it represented an
important step forward for the Nazi movement. In particular, it
helped to establish their respectability by their association with
ordinary conservative politicians and by bringing Hitler into close
contact with the representatives of the cartels and of monopoly
capitalism generally.

When the economic crisis broke, Germany was particularly
seriously affected.

International Industrial Production 1928-31

	Germany	France	UK
1928	98.6	91.4	94.3
1929	100.0	100.0	100.0
1930	82.4	100.6	100.7
1931	69.1	89.3	83.5

From 1929 to 1933 German exports fell by almost two-thirds, at
a time when almost one-third of German industrial production was
exported. During the boom years expansion had been financed by
short-term loans from foreign sources. At the first sign of the
economic crisis foreign investors started to pull out their funds,
accelerated by general fears about Germany's political future.

In December 1929 there were about 1½ million workers on
relief and during January 1930 unemployment grew by almost
another million. Müller's coalition fell on the question of financing
the deficit on the unemployment insurance fund, the SPD being
unwilling to cut down relief payments and the German People's
Party, closely linked to industry, opposing the rise in contributions
that would have been necessary to continue them. Heinrich
Brüning of the Centre party took over from Müller and formed a
right-wing government mainly composed of old faces from the
coalition. In these conditions of political instability elections
followed on September 14, 1930 at which the Nazis made sub-
stantial gains, increasing their number of Reichstag seats from
twelve to 107, so becoming the second biggest party in the
assembly after the SPD. The KPD did well, increasing its vote from
3.3 to 4.6 million and seats from fifty-four to seventy-seven. They
overtook the Centre party as the third largest parliamentary group.
The SPD won 143 seats, a loss of ten from the previous elections.
Most of the Nazi gains came from disaffected right-wing voters
dropping the Nationalists and the German People's party, who lost
over three million votes. Their biggest advances were made in
Protestant agricultural areas such as Pomerania, East Prussia and

Schleswig-Holstein, whereas the Communists did well among the working class in Hamburg, Berlin, Leipzig and East Düsseldorf. It was during this crisis that the *Kuhle Wampe* enterprise took place, when the KPD was increasingly becoming the political leadership of the unemployed and of workers threatened by unemployment in key industrial areas of Germany. The rising tide. of the class struggle, the electoral gains and the developing ideological influence of the party on decisive sections of the working class made it easy for · bourgeois intellectuals like Ottwald and Dudow with little practical knowledge of the German Labour movement to mistake the KPD workers for an inexorable force, not merely representing historical necessity but incarnating it, the miraculous unity of subject and object.

Film production after 1930
Before the slump had fully developed, the means of production were already being withdrawn from progressive workers in the film industry. The UFA combine increasingly monopolised the run of productions, backed by American capital and tied to the Nationalist party. The Brecht lawsuit over the *Threepenny Opera* film perhaps marked a turning point in this process, with the difficulties in getting *St Joan of the Stockyards* staged and the departure of Piscator from the Berlin scene. As a complement to this process of material deprivation, in fact a lock-out, the crisis in the political superstructure of the disintegrating republic was causing the German ruling class to have wide recourse to censorship and coercive means of controlling artistic output. Given its deep roots in the German working class movement, the theatre was a particularly sensitive area for the rulers and censorship was at least as common as in other media. The police interference with Brecht's Lehrstücke *Die Mutter* and *Die Massnahme* are well known examples. Broadly, the ruling class sought to stop KPD influence in the institutions they actually owned by the expedient of the lock-out, and to use litigation to censor those works that were performed in institutions outside their direct economic control, the working-men's clubs and the halls in the suburbs.[3] *Kuhle Wampe* can be seen as an experiment to explore the possibilities of finding a means to circumvent these restrictions on left artistic activity. This attempt involved the makers of *Kuhle Wampe* in work with substantially different productive relations than they had been used to (except perhaps Eisler, who had worked with workers' choirs for some years).[4] The sponsoring wings of the cultural organisa-tions of the German working class performed the functions of the owners and promoters of the institutional film and theatre companies.

Cultural traditions (i)
The general features of working class cultural life in the larger

Merson has summed them up as follows:

' The German working class movement represented, in the earlier
part of the twentieth century, perhaps to a greater extent than in
any other capitalist country, a distinct proletarian culture, separate
from the culture of the bourgeoisie and based on a highly developed
network of class institutions, including not only trade unions and
political parties but a vast range of cultural organisations such
as workers' sports clubs, choirs, dramatic societies etc, down to
radio circles and Esperanto leagues. The proletarian culture was
in some ways even more distinctive than in Britain, for religion
had less hold on the population, at least in the Protestant areas
which included two-thirds of the population, while the ideas of
liberalism, defeated in 1848, had never acquired the same influence
over the workers as in Britain.'[5]

The heyday of this culture was perhaps in the years immediately
preceding the First World War, when the massive edifice of German
Social Democracy progressed slowly (as it believed) towards
Socialism, and in the general political inertia of Wilhelmine Ger-
many much energy could be used in developing the cultural wing
of the movement that might have been used for trade union or
party ends in a less tranquil period. After the War in the aftermath
of the failure of Sparticist uprising in 1918, the cultural institutions
continued with much the same structure as before, except that the
split in the international movement between Communists and
Social Democrats was reflected in internal policy struggles in the
working class cultural organisations. But at this stage these internal
struggles did not threaten the continued existence of the organisa-
tions *per se*. In a different sphere, sections of the bourgeois intelli-
gentsia, sickened by the imperialist war and the deficiencies of life
in the Weimar Republic, had tied themselves to the working class
movement. In particular, a new type of committed revolutionary
artist had appeared, exemplified by Piscator. Given the traditions
of the German working-class movement they naturally saw the
opportunity to develop a· new revolutionary art having a Marxist
standpoint, as a weapon against capitalism. While many of them,
Hanns Eisler for instance, were well known figures, the later Stalinist
emphasis in the Communist movement on the use of such figures
merely as opinion leaders for the bourgeois intelligentsia in a more
or less symbolic way was absent in Germany in the early 1920s. The
KPD welcomed the adherence of ' famous men ' but did not seek to
abstract their fame from their work simply for purposes of collect-
ing signatures on petitions.

Cultural traditions (ii)
The world economic crisis brought to an end the possibilities of
large-scale technical experimentation in the theatre and the political

changes in the policy of the Comintern after the World Congress of 1928 meant that ·a new relationship was postulated between the cultural wings of the working-class organisation and the KPD and between the left-bourgeois intellectuals and the party. In the case of the former this tended to lead to a more or less indiscriminate expulsion of the SPD functionaries from the working-class organ- isations; as early as 1928 the old Social Democrat leaders had been removed from the leadership of the Berlin Arbeiter Theaterbund and Communist Béla Balázs elected president. While the SPD ideological influence on these organisations was deadening, to say the least, the individuals involved were generally workers by origin and were not necessarily accomplices in the continuing development of capitalism to the same extent and in the same way as the SPD leadership. The new Comintern line led the KPD to attempt to organise the bourgeois intellectuals into trade union type organisations, in Germany the BPRS – the League of Prole- tarian-Revolutionary writers, and in many cases to substitute them for the old SPD functionaries in the working class cultural organisations.[6] Some of the leading KPD intellectuals involved were not themselves German by origin, but recently exiled Communists from East European countries overtaken by reaction. Béla Balázs and Andor Gábor were Hungarian, Otto Bihalji and Theodor Balk from Yugoslavia. Whatever personal abilities these new leaders possessed, on the whole they were applying policy without close knowledge and experience of work in the German labour movement. This state of affairs coupled with the ultra-left tendencies implicit in the general post-1928 Comintern line led to a very exaggerated subjectivism in artistic policy as elsewhere. The chimera of a specifically proletarian art was pursued, to be developed within German capitalism; this art was to be constructed without the justification in the Soviet Union of the existence of a socialist government in the country. It may seem that this is a too sweeping condemnation of what may be regarded as a healthy dismissal of bourgeois art and culture. But it should be borne in mind that Marx and Engels did not leave any guidance in their theoretical writings on how a socialist art and literature should be developed within a capitalist society; nor was other theoretical work from classical Marxist writers available to the leaders of the BPRS in the late 1920s. The effort to create a chemically pure class art in Germany was in practice voluntaristic and undertaken in the absence of theory. The extent to which subjectivism had overtaken the theoretical perspectives of the BPRS and led to extreme narrowing of outlook and onesidedness can be exemplified by the statement of Erich Steffen, a member of the left fraction in the organisation, in *Linkskurve* 1930, No 2[7] to the effect that even proletarian litera- ture should be restricted to portrayals of workers actually engaged in the process of material production. The BPRS left fraction had its opponents on the right led by Georg Lukács. This tendency

sought to reject the documentary method which had developed through the *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement[8] and to reject the kind of theses about the changed role of art and artists in urban capitalist society most clearly articulated by Walter Benjamin.[9] In rejecting what he regarded as the formalism of much modern art, Lukács urged the retention of the classical forms of bourgeois literature, in particular the nineteenth century novel. The debate was to some extent reflected in *Kuhle Wampe*, in the question of narrative method.

As a result of the increasing depth of the crisis of German society and the success of socialist construction in the USSR, an increasing number of intellectuals came to the side of the working class and the KPD and of those involved in artistic activity, a number were influenced by the BPRS without necessarily sharing all its preconceptions. Before the *Kuhle Wampe* project, Brecht, Eisler and Ottwald had tended to work at the periphery of the cultural organisations, in Brecht's case making use of their facilities to get *Die Massnahme* shown around the Berlin working class districts. Their relationship to the literary debates is tenuous and uncertain. In the case of *Kuhle Wampe* the problem is particularly difficult, as several elements of theory meet in their works. The most critical of these are the latent but largely unarticulated theory of Brecht's epic theatre as applied to film, having been developed in the central institution of Weimar culture, the theatre. His main collaborator on the script, Ernst Ottwald, was basically a novelist whose work had already been under attack from Lukács as over reliant on montage techniques. Lukács' position was that the kind of juxtapositions developed through montage techniques could only show objective reality in a static way, however many contradictions might be depicted. Another aspect of the situation in which they worked was the relative decline in the cultural life of the working class itself. In the years of the slump a sub-culture of the unemployed had begun to form, living little above starvation level. Their extreme economic difficulties laid them open to ' lumpen ' influences on their ideology and behaviour. In many areas they formed the backbone of the KPD's support and their cultural outlets were likely to be those provided by the Party itself such as the sports events seen in *Kuhle Wampe*.

The problem of authorship
In the film, the controversies in the BPRS and associated left literary mileu made themselves evident in the type of narrative used. The dominant formal principle is that of montage,[10] either in entire scenes as at the beginning of the film showing unemployed workers bicycling around Berlin looking for work, or in important sections of other scenes. In this respect it is possible to say that it is Ottwald's film. This impression is reinforced by Brecht's rather apologetic attitude towards it, which is not confined to his emphasis on

the material difficulties involved in its making. The music of the composer Eisler generally complements the montage elements; its nervous chromaticism seems often to reflect the rapid scenic development, cutting and jumps in the development of the montage structure. In the great majority of the scenes in *Kuhle Wampe* the music has little or no distance from the text and in effect only attempts simple empathetic emotional effects. No doubt in a film made in only a few weeks nobody in their right mind could expect the complexity of the music-text relationship attained by Eisenstein and Prokofiev in, say, *Ivan the Terrible* after long collaboration in good material conditions. There was also little opportunity for detailed writer-musician collaboration at the editing stage of the film's production. But after all reservations have been made, the fact remains that generally speaking, the effect of Eisler's music is by and large only to reinforce the montage cuts and the music itself comes dangerously near to being the abstract embodiment of fate that Brecht deplored in bourgeois dramas. An indication of the basic dialectic can be made if a *gest* is developed, say the eviction of the Bönike family for failing to pay their rent. In the crisis of capitalism, the authors of the film could take it for granted that their audience would have a sufficient degree of class consciousness (they believed) to understand the place of such events in historical development and thus it seemed sufficient in making a realist film only to show class rule in its most instrumental forms. The *gest* explains itself in itself visually and only the accompaniment of music is needed to intensify the positive emotions of the audience. With hindsight, the limitations of this problematic as a delineation of the film/class consciousness relationship are obvious. In political terms it is implied that the ' typical ' unemployed worker who might see the film in Wedding or Kreutzberg in 1931 would be automatically aware of the causes of the unemployment that affected him. Main significations in *Kuhle Wampe* depend on the ability of the *gest* to convey latent and unarticulated knowledge of the cause of the event signified. The sectarian positions of the KPD at the time did not seem to have produced this knowledge in the minds of more than a minority of the workers who constituted the film's original audiences. If this is the dominant pattern in the composition of *Kuhle Wampe*, the other elements can be roughly ascribed to Brecht's influence: challenging the silence of the visual *gests* of the early scenes, the sharp and ironic dialogue about coffee burnings on the S-Bahn: the words of the *Solidaritätslied* as an expression of the needs of the German people in the crisis. This influence is of course not simply a matter of verbal insertions in Dudow's selection of shots. The text of the film does have a generally non-Aristotelian approach to the problems of a realistic depiction of working class life; elements of what were later to become epic structural principles are present.

The first scene of the film opens with an attempt to show the effects
of the world economic crisis on the unemployed workers of Berlin.
A montage of newspapers showing the catastrophic rise in un-
employment is projected. This does not simply serve a general
atmospheric purpose, but makes an important *gest* and establishes
a determination that remains throughout the film—*viz* that the means
of production have been withdrawn from the workers and that their
problems have to be solved away from the point of production.
Other emphases exist, of course, for example the central importance
of the newspaper as a means of communication among the un-
employed. Few were likely to own radios if they were single men
and most suffered from a form of technological backwardness in
the city. It is worth noticing that the situation the newspapers show
is purely economic; the problematic of Ottwald's collage method-
ology is already apparent in the absence of politics, the mirror
reflection of headlines. The effect of the method is basically syn-
thetic rather than analytic. (The conventional response – banal –
would be horror at the mechanisms of capitalism – basically a
liberal response that is exploited every week by the popular Sunday
press).

There is no real *gest* or social attitude found here, by any criteria
drawn from Brecht's writings. Then one of the best known shots
in the film; a group of unemployed workers wait by a street corner
bollard. One of them obtains a newspaper and after looking at the
job advertisements the group set off like a pack of wolves hunting
work. The *gest* here, though, is that of riding bicycles. The camera
work is effective in the shots of revolving bicycle wheels on the
asphalt of the street. The tradition here is that of early Expression-
ism, of *Die Acht Millionen Stadt*, where flowers and green trees are
absent, overwhelmed by countless square miles of asphalt and
buildings. It is a determination in relation to nature, or rather its
absence in Berlin. Expressionism has become socialised to a degree
(cf the memorable *chiaroscuro* lighting effects with the wheels) but
only to a degree. The moment is biologically satisfying and in no
sense represents any socially governed struggle with a hostile
nature such as the unemployed might be expected to undertake.
The young Bönike is not differentiated in any significant way from
the mass of job seekers. However fast he rides to an address where
a job is advertised, the others always keep up. There is no dialogue
in the scene. Looking for work is seen as a silent activity. There is
only the noise of the street, the sound of feet upon cobbles in the
stagnating city, to accompany the search. The relations with the
employers are only shown externally – waiting around factory gates.
The unemployed have become part of the sub-culture, with few
social relations outside their own number and none with the
owners of the means of production. With this in mind, the difficulty
can be seen of defining *Kuhle Wampe* as an epic film in the

Hegelian-Lukács sense; the totality of objects in the objective world cannot be depicted, except sometime externally – in factories in this scene, the coalyard in Reel 3. Whole segments of the social order are absent as they are not in say, *St Joan of the Stockyards.*

Some contradictions are made conscious around the dining table of the Bönike family. But as they grumble about the difficulties of paying the rent in a more or less inconsequential way, young Bönike is silent. Emerging from the public sphere of the street, he finds ignorance about the problems of the unemployed like himself. After being criticised for being rude to the landlady, he commits suicide by jumping out of the window, having first removed his watch. His silence is anyway symbolic, and as such the social causes of his action become unrelated to the effect they created. This is the key to the puzzlement of the first Soviet audiences of *Kuhle Wampe*, many of whom could not understand the suicide of a worker who owned a watch. What is at issue is not the simple fact of watch ownership, as some bourgeois critics have suggested, but that it is a token surrounded with mystery when the main *gest* of the young Bönike is in relation to it, not to any social being. The weakness of the pure montage method in concentrating on the reproduction and juxtaposition of appearances of objects is clear here. The silence exemplifies the political problem. The more or less reactionary consciousness of the Bönike family is shown by a simple notation but nothing of the kind is attempted with the son. For all the audience know, an outside factor such as mental illness could have caused the suicide. The Expressionist phantom is present in a different guise here, that of the father-son generation conflict. In this scene in *Kuhle Wampe*, as in many Expressionist dramas, the struggle between classes is reified into a struggle between generations. It appears from this scene as if the uncomprehending father Bönike is directly responsible for his son's death. Superficially, this appears to be so, but it is clear that he is as much a victim of society as his son, and the basic cause is the poverty and degradation in which they both live.

The effect of the suicide on the small community living near the Bönikes' allows some distance to develop in the internal structure; those who find the body are both anonymous and named in a sense that the bicycle-riding unemployed are not. Two concepts of time are opposed – the historical time of the young Bönike, who has been made to choose his ' time ' by objective conditions and the ' natural ' time of the old woman who remarks when she sees his body on the ground ' Such a young man. He still had the best of life before him.' For a moment dramatic irony of the classical kind is present. Because he is dead, the silence of the young Bönike's consciousness is an objective necessity and is therefore acceptable; the pretence is no longer maintained that his consciousness contains the totality of social contradictions in the film. Thus the old woman can speak to him and also about him as he is dead. For

the first time a cause and effect relationship have been shown. But the political significance of the old woman's comments should not be overestimated; performing a function like that of the chorus in classical drama, she reinforces the *gest* of the classical tragedy of Fate, of inexorable necessity. When another woman says ' One fewer unemployed ' she only sketches a relation of young Bönike's death to the external conjecture. Comment is weighted towards recognition of natural necessity, rather than clarification of the historical situation, as would be found in the mature Brecht. Young Bönike's death is a defeat for everyone present and living nearby. The bearing-witness at the scene of the martyr's death has many antecedents, perhaps the earliest being on a hill in Palestine. In few of them is there implied the possibility of the transformation of the social order that caused the death to take place.

Reel 2: The wonderful life of a young person
The problem of the rent arrears is not altered for the family by young Bönike's death. With no additional source of income coming into the house they cannot pay up and are duly evicted. In the scene, though, it is not the process of moving out or scenes on the stairs or whatever that is shown but a court scene dominated by a dull judge. He finds in favour of the landlady. The mechanisms of the law from the standpoint of the plaintiff are seen as the external agent causing misery. The landlady herself is never shown.[11] Only the formal instrument of bourgeois justice is depicted rather than the content of the class warfare between the landlord and tenant themselves. As the family Bönike has been defeated economically and cannot exist any longer in its old form, the daughter Anni moves towards the absent centre previously occupied by the young Bönike. Whereas the boy himself was supposed to support the family directly, Anni brings help from outside in their distress. She telephones her boy-friend Fritz, a taxi driver, and tells him that their furniture is standing out on the pavement. The call is received by Fritz at his place of work. He agrees to help and suggests that the family should move to Kuhle Wampe.

As soon as the furniture and assorted belongings are loaded onto Fritz's car, a new perspective opens for the Bönike family. The voice of a commentator informs the narrator that Kuhle Wampe is to be its site. For the original German audience this had associations which are not obvious to an English audience today. ' Kuhle Wampe ' is a slang term in German meaning, roughly, ' blown out ', or having had a stomachful of beer. Although the family have left the normal pattern of urban life under compulsion, many moved to the island of their own free will, as a means of escape from the city, close to Nature and free from the constraints of industrial life, a utopia in miniature. The voice of the commentator points out that Kuhle Wampe was founded in 1913, a time when the ' Wandervogel ' movement flourished. This *gest* of

the Nature of Kuhle Wampe confirms it as a strongly petit bourgeois environment; although the dream houses may only be flimsy and built of wood their situation is that of individually owned dwellings in a natural world (ie are exempt from historical laws). Ewen's view that Kuhle Wampe is a 'militant proletarian environment' is a product of a basic misreading of the film.[12] An impression: the music we hear on the radio as soon as we 'arrive' is to the taste of old Bönike; the diet is of old military music from the German army, hardly the militant marches of the Left.

The *gest* of moving in the furniture is particularly important. This battered miscellany of objects, the lares and penates of the Bönikes' domestic world. The heavy commodes and chaises longues are lifted by the family into the wooden chalet, their dark solidity contrasting markedly with its poor construction. It is as if they become ever heavier, ever more difficult to lift as the family move further from the scenes of material production and deeper into the clinging world of the North German forests.

For a while Anni moves nearer the centre of the film. She wanders through the woods with Fritz as Helene Weigel sings 'Das Frühjahr'. For a while the idyll lasts; the spectators see the world from Anni's viewpoint, moving away from the intensive concentration on the family as the basic social unit towards her problems as an unmarried young woman; in the circumstances she cannot leave the family structure and her 'emancipation' from the problems of working class life in the city takes the form of a love affair with Fritz. The whole attitude of the scene is a further example of the shadow of the old Expressionist problematic and its accompanying problems of symbolic action unrelated to the complex structure of social relations. The disinterested love of Anni and Fritz is contrasted with the attitude of the Bönike parents. Old Bönike is reading the confessions of a high class prostitute in a newspaper. His wife is making up a shopping list showing the price of salt, potatoes and other domestic necessities. The contradiction is shown between the material reality of this marriage and the pure idealistic love of Anni and Fritz. For the audience of 1932 another *gest* would perhaps have been strong – *viz* the all pervasive character of mass communications in bourgeois society. Thanks to the radio and newspapers, Bönike's intellectual world is much the same as it would have been in the city – a 'natural' life in Kuhle Wampe is only a physical escape from the city; in the age of mass communications it is possible for the ruling class to reach even into the depths of the forests to promote their ideology.

The consequence of the love affair is that Anni becomes pregnant. The child is unwanted and Fritz is anxious to secure an abortion. Old Bönike reacts predictably, raging and fuming. In one of the most effective scenes in the film a rapid montage of images of children and of factory life show the problems of 'free love' in

Particularly effective is the reflection of the myriad commodities a
mother has to deal with connected with having babies and children.
The economic difficulties make marriage seem inevitable. A satirical
gest is taken up by the film itself when Anni is seen standing by
a film placard for *Nie Wieder Liebe,* a sentimental UFA film
of the day starring Lillian Harvey. The film is perhaps on its
strongest ground in this area, as its content could be determined in
relation to the various mystifying and sentimental treatments of
love in society that were being produced by the bourgeois cinema.
The montage shots of the baby products etc are effective because
of their combination of material biological necessity with com-
modity status, an echo of earlier scenes in the film. At the same
time the sequence shows Anni at work in an electrical goods
factory, so the problems of the woman (based upon the hypocritical
bourgeois attitudes to love and marriage) are closely linked with
her activity as a worker in the process of capitalist production. (The
fact that this is so makes it appear that the practice of *Kuhle
Wampe's* makers reflected the viewpoint of the extreme-left faction
within the BPRS that proletarian art should confine itself to show-
ing the workers in the process of production. In fact Brecht, Dudow
and Ottwald did not do so in the film, finding positive social values
outside the factory, most prominently in the workers' sports
festival.)

The betrothal feast takes place. The question of marriage is not
central to the interest of the scene; what is important is the
makers' emphasis on legitimate celebrations such as the feast as
occasions for the debasement of the people's idealism by the ruling
class. Hard-earned money, perhaps savings, are spent on buying
vast quantities of food and beer which the guests consume as well-
earned respite from hardship or guzzle like pigs in a trough,
depending on viewpoint. It is an affair of the older generation. The
efforts of the old people to enjoy themselves as well as an inhuman
society permits do not appeal to Fritz, who takes upon himself the
job of waiter while the guests slowly go under. He ends up sitting
apart outside. After a row he and Anni part and she leaves to
stay with her friend Gerda. The significance of the scene is uncer-
tain. Fritz's *gest* of standing outside the festival can be interpreted
as a positive one, showing that he stands outside the petit
bourgeois influences on working class culture. Given his own social
position this would seem doubtful. And if so, it is rather heavy
moralism to condemn people for getting drunk at a betrothal. Yet
this is the point made, that the pleasures of the betrothal are
degrading in Kuhle Wampe society, compared to the healthy
and dignifying sports in the already existing communist society of
the sports club.

Reel 3: Who does the world belong to?
The final reel of the film opens by showing the environment of indus-

trial Berlin, with a huge coalyard the main feature on the industrial landscape. It is a functional world of production in contrast to the world of consumption of Kuhle Wampe. The second shot shows the interior of a workers' clubroom, a wooden building. The process of distributing posters to advertise the forthcoming workers' sports festival takes place, and the attitude of the main *gest* is clearly that of emphasis on the conscious and purposeful organisation of entertainment by the workers, as opposed to the practices of Kuhle Wampe. Anni's friend Gerda has a place in this politically conscious world and is busy painting posters. Fritz is still disorientated by the excesses of the betrothal, and appears, looking for Anni. He expresses doubts about the sports, about the relationship of the individual woman, his Anni, to the mass of other women who will be there. There is no doubt that the scenes of the sports which follow are likely to raise similar doubts in the minds of many spectators today, as the *gests* demonstrating the benefits of physical exercise in an organised framework bear a strong resemblance to later German films, many of them made for the Nazis, culminating in those of the 1936 Olympic Games. It could perhaps be said of *Kuhle Wampe* that some of the effect is derived from Eisler's music, but the fact remains that the moving Brecht song *Solidaritätslied.* sung by the workers as they go to the sports festival, has a deeply political character, about the struggle to overcome hunger and want; about the efforts of the weak and oppressed to attain sufficient sustenance and human dignity. The concentration of the film upon appearances gives the unfortunate impression in this scene that the participants in the sports have long since ceased to worry about material problems but by virtue of taking part in the sports have become model specimens of healthy German working class manhood and womanhood. The idealist element in the film's structure is dominant here; it appears that by joining in the KPD's cultural activities it is possible to transcend the material conditions of working class life, the problems of rent arrears for the Bönikes and thousands more, the withdrawal of benefit by the Government for millions of unemployed. This is particularly so in the rowing, in which Gerda participates. The shots of the second half of the festival include an interesting scene in which the Red Megaphone theatre group perform the 'Song of the Red United Front' and the *Solidaritätslied* is sung again. There is no orthodox political content in their performance, abstract exhortation is the order of the day. The *gest* of the spectators is that of attentive observation. The mass spectacle has had a positive effect on the audience, moving some of them to theoretical activity, exemplified by a youth reading aloud from Hegel while sitting on the grass. Further, a reconciliation takes place between Fritz and Anni, as a result of their attendance at the event. An ideal unity is depicted, based on a distinctive class culture, maintained and developed by the KPD while it degenerates among the sections of the people

outside the party.

In good spirits, the mass of spectators leave the event and get onto the S-Bahn, the Berlin underground train. During the world economic crisis large quantities of basic commodities had to be destroyed because the collapse of the market had led to classical problems of overproduction during capitalist crisis. The propaganda of the German monopolies could not prevent a feeling of outrage and disgust over this process, here symbolised by coffee burning, particularly among the normally thrifty and plain living German lower middle class. A passenger on the train sees a report in his newspaper that informs him that Brazil has burnt 24 million pounds worth of coffee. The nearby passengers deplore the waste involved in entirely accurate terms, no doubt, but only criticising the destruction on vague moral grounds. The workers try to point out that the waste is indeed as bad as they say, but that it is an inevitable result of the workings of the capitalist mode of production. The political attitude of the workers to the problem poses a question for the spectators; can the German middle strata be won over to the side of the working class in its struggle against capitalism? In this final scene, *Kuhle Wampe*, while depicting many of the problems and preconceptions of the Third Period of Comintern policy looks forward to the new emphases of the Popular Front period and the 1930's. The adhesion of the mass of the petit-bourgeoisie and some sections of the working class labour aristocracy to the right-wing parties indicates that this problem was not satisfactorily resolved by the KPD before it was too late. The confines of the train do not allow much scope for montage as such; the way of advance is shown as being through argument on open terrain (in which Fritz takes part, indicating the progressive development of his consciousness), rather than within the confines of a formal conception of working class political culture, however rich it may once have been. As such *Kuhle Wampe* is a reflection of a period of transition, when the conceptions of one period were giving way in favour of the adoption of those of a successor.

Notes

1. Brecht distinguishes the notion of the *gest* from Lukács' 'type' as 'the particular in the general' rather than 'the general in the particular'. The *gest* has a diagrammatic character, demonstrating how something is done; the diagram is then located by an index to a precise location – to take an example from the Shelley poem Brecht admired, the opening lines of a stanza from 'The Mask of Anarchy' – ' I met a murder on the way, he had a mask like Castlereagh ', murder being the abstract, general, whereas Castlereagh is the concrete and particular.
2. Ruge: *Weimar-Republic auf Zeit*, Berlin 1969, pp 219-283.
3. For further details see Werner Mittenzwei's *Brecht – von der 'Massnahme' zu 'Leben des Galilei'*, Berlin 1965. The police seem often to have understood plays better than many critics did.
4. Cf *Sinn und Form, Sonderheft Hanns Eisler*, Berlin 1964.
5. Allan Merson: 'The Struggle for Socialist consciousness in Nazi

64   Germany', *Marxism Today*, November 1973.
6. Cf Helga Gallas: *Marxistische Literaturtheorie*, Berlin 1971, especially pp 46-70.
7. *Linskurve* was the journal of the League of Proletarian Revolutionary Writers. It continued to appear until the end of 1932.
8. A useful summary of the movement can be found in *Expressionism* by John Willet, London 1970.
9. Cf 'The Author as Producer' in *Understanding Brecht*, London 1973.
10. I am grateful to Ben Brewster for providing a useful working definition for the standard German usage of this term, that of a work whose openness and heterogeneity is characterised by assembling (simultaneously or successively) a series of strongly homogeneous units within a deliberately incongruous frame (eg Heartfield's photomontages, Piscator's stagings, Eisenstein's films, particularly *October* and *The General Line*).
11. It is perhaps fair to point out that censorship has reduced the social reflection on their *gest*. In the original version the landlord-tenant conflict was to be illustrated by the Red Megaphone singing the *Lied der Obdachlosen* (Song of the Homeless).
12. Cf Fredric Ewen, *Bertolt Brecht – His life, his art, his times*, New York 1967, pp 279-281.

Bernard Eisenschitz

1. The story of *Kuhle Wampe* derived from a short report Slatan
Dudow read in the newspaper about an unemployed worker com-
mitting suicide.[1] Such news items were then as frequent as those
that started Carl Mayer on *The Last Laugh* and Brecht on *The
Bread Shop* (*Der Brotladen*, 1929). Thus it is significant that rather
than choose a ' rough piece of reality ' as raw material, the authors
opted for the media's account of that reality. On the other hand,
once the contradictions contained in such material have been
made clear, a fruitful and desirable part of the dramatic work is to
divide each unit of the plot into sub-units, titles, and even news-
paper articles (*A Man's a Man*).

In *Kuhle Wampe*, the role of the newspaper is confirmed by in-
scribing its social function in the fiction: its function of production
(if looking for work becomes work, then the small-ads journal, like
the bicycle, becomes an instrument of work); of reproduction (of
bourgeois ideology: the father reads out the story of the dancer
Mata Hari while the mother is checking the accounts); or its
revolutionary function (the militant sale of Communist papers at
the Sports Festival).

The importance of this initial stimulus is far from negligible since
it refers to the category of the ' typical ' as Walter Benjamin defined
it in his article on *Potemkin*,[1a] and as the censor understood it in
his conversation with Brecht and Dudow (cf *A Small Contribution
to the Theme of Realism* above). For instance, the statistics for
January 1931 record the suicide of eight unemployed workers in a
single day.[2] Thus one of *Kuhle Wampe*'s most significant lessons is
the relationship between the typical and the notions of *Gestus*
and montage.

2. By 1930, industrial production had fallen by 40 per cent since
1913, and, between 1929 and 1932, unemployment had risen from
13.2 per cent of the working population to 43.8 per cent. In January
1930, 80 per cent of those unemployed were drawing unemploy-
ment benefits, whereas by December, the figure had fallen to
57 per cent.

' By January 1931, 700,000 unemployed workers had to resort to help
from welfare departments while 650,000 others were no longer

receiving anything. The decree of December 1930 and the budget projected for 1931 provided for a considerable reduction of the relief funds destined for the unemployed. . . .'

Since July 1930, the Reichstag's role had been almost nil. The Brüning government was in fact operating through emergency decrees under Article 48 of the Constitution, that allowed for the suspension of fundamental rights.

Faced with this situation, which favoured the success of Nazi propaganda among the middle classes and the peasantry, the Social Democrats abdicated any political initiative, following instead the line of the ' lesser evil ' and refusing in principle the ' two terrors ': the white and the red. And its mass organisations remained idle, while as early as summer 1930 the Nazis committed a series of assassinations. In March 1932, Carl von Ossietsky wrote that ' The shocking fact in the present situation is not that fascism is on the increase, but that the others are adapting themselves to it.' In contrast to the Social Democrats' lack of perspectives, the masses had been radicalised and the working classes had grown more pugnacious in the face of police repression (between March 1931 and March 1932, 677 Communist workers were arrested, fifty-four others killed, while more than 4,000 Communist meetings were banned and 700 others broken up). Thus organised activities could be found both in the KPD itself and in the mass organisations whose aim was not directly political but rather that of politic-isation, through the elaboration of Marxist practices vis-à-vis culture, sport and the relationship between leisure and work; for instance, the sports federation *Kampfgemeinschaft für rote Sportein-heit*, under Communist leadership and comprising 110,000 members.

However, the programme presented by the KPD in August 1930 did contain some serious errors. Wilhelm Pieck has pointed out that '. . . it did not sufficiently insist on the struggle for the defence of democracy and of the political rights of the mass of the people. . . . The attack was directed against the Nazis and the Social Democrats alike, . . . the acuteness of the fascist peril was not yet understood.. The Party should have made every effort to form a united front of the Communists and the Social Demo-crats . . . without being deterred by the distinctly reactionary policies of the Social-Democrat leaders and their rejection of unity of action.' And in an analysis of *Kuhle Wampe* the belated cor-rection of these errors must, to some extent, be taken into con-sideration.

3. The unemployed worker's suicide and the other situations forming the fictional plot of *Kuhle Wampe* were not fresh material. They can be found in the theatre, both in the naturalistic theatre of ideas, then undergoing a revival, and in agit-prop, ie, the amateur theatrical companies grouped in the League of the Theatre

Workers of Germany. Recent re-edition of the texts[3] has revealed
what seems to have been most often schematic dramatic writing;
on the other hand, the *mise-en-scène* marked a decisive departure
from the naturalism of the professional bourgeois theatre.

Finally, they could be found in the cinema, in a populist current
(with its side-lights and epigones, a slight influence on large-scale
production) corresponding qua production to the agit-prop. Indeed,
the company fostering most of these attempts, Prometheus, was
the German branch of a Soviet firm emanating from an inter-
national mass organisation, the Mezhrabpom (the Russian acronym
for International Workers' Aid). But a production-distribution
system creating its own ' apparatus ', as in the theatre, was still
a technical impossibility.[4] Militant films distributed by revolutionary
organisations were therefore distinctly separate from the fiction
films Prometheus also produced: these ranged from exposing
exploitation and misery (*Hunger in Waldenburg*) to social melo-
drama (*Jensseits der Strasse*). Very superior to the bulk of con-
temporary German production, these films indicated various
attempts to depart from naturalism, in order to found a new
cinema along the lines of the Soviet films distributed by Prome-
theus. But even in the best work, that of Piel Jutzi (*Hunger in
Waldenburg, Mutter Krausens Fahrt ins Glück*), passive repro-
duction of a reality supposedly containing self-revelation blocked
such attempts at the stage of active pessimism.[5]

4. Brecht's ' lax ' views regarding intellectual property are well
known. To quote Bernhard Reich's description of how Brecht
worked:

' Were a visitor to arrive Brecht would see this as a positive asset
to his work; he would read out a particularly difficult passage,
thereby either testing the quality of the work on his visitor, or
checking it with him. He would then immediately sit down at the
typewriter and type out the new version. Brecht knew that
participation by a number of people was fruitful to the work and
he would gather around him young people, collaborators. They
would assemble material, discuss his plans with him, offer
suggestions, alterations, improvements; and they are featured as
collaborators in his publications.'[6]

Brecht did not use his capacity for appropriating and assimilating
the knowledge of others to claim it as his own knowledge, but with
a generative purpose, in order to make it function. For the artist
of the modern age, examples and models of art change according
to its function; they must be sought for in science as much as in
a critical or positively sarcastic re-reading of the classics. Brecht
named as his ' best books of 1926 ' a series of scientific and docu-
mentary works, and even only the illustrations of one of these
volumes. ' From the reviews, I gather that books are not usually

judged by their value as raw material, but that is how I judge them.'[7]

This accounts for Brecht's disappointment when experts were unable to explain to him the hidden mechanisms of the stock exchange.

' I had the feeling these processes could quite simply not be explained, that is, they defeated reason, which in turn means they were irrational, that is all. The way the world's grain was distributed could simply not be grasped. From every point of view, except that of a handful of speculators, this grain market was but a huge swamp. The drama I had envisaged I did not write; instead I began reading Marx, and then – only then – did I read Marx. Now my own scattered practical experiences and impressions really did begin to come alive.'[8]

Initiated by this creative block during the Weimar Republic's period of relative stability, Brecht's discovery of Marxism, a theoretical discovery, was soon to be concretely anchored in the development of class struggles in Germany. In the eyes of German intellectuals (for some only after their exile), these struggles finally destroyed the classical image of the author. If Brecht was trying to create the theatre of the scientific age, then the didactic play was the theatre of this age at a given stage in its development. The analysis of the proletarian organisations then led them to take into account some conclusions reached by the avant-garde theatre, notably that the artistic producer (ie, the agit-prop troupes) inscribes the conditions of his production within the aesthetic process.

' When they (the workers) themselves wrote and produced for the stage they were wonderfully original. The so-called agit-prop art, at which people, not always the best people, turned up their noses, was a mine of new artistic material and modes of expression. From it there emerged long-forgotten, magnificent elements from genuine epochs of popular art, boldly modified for new social aims: breathtaking short-cuts and compressions, beautiful simplifications, in which there was often an astonishing elegance and pregnancy and an unwavering eye for the complex.'[9]

This Dudow also learnt from an extremely rich apprenticeship: from a traineeship on the shooting-set of *Metropolis* via study of theatrical science with Max Hermann, work with an agit-prop company, study in Moscow of the work of Meyerhold and Eisen-stein (at the height of the polemic about the ' living man ' and intellectual cinema) to, finally, in September 1929, an assistantship in Brecht's theatre on the *Schiffbauerdamm*.

For Dudow, to build a new theatre and destroy naturalism required using and integrating knowledge from outside the theatre as it was then conceived. His first premises for an aesthetic theory

related to his political commitment were reached through scientific theories: Max Planck and his critique of positivism, Einstein and also Freud and Pavlov.[10]

Kuhle Wampe took position on a number of polemical matters: intellectual cinema, kino-eye, agit-prop. 'Here before our eyes are impulses towards a progressive cinema,' write Werner Hecht and Wolfgang Gersch[11] quite correctly, referring to the contemporary character of the film. The sentence could be re-written as follows so as to give some idea of the effort of assimilation and reflection it implies: on the function of the cinema as much as on existing aesthetic trends.

Here, as in Brecht's theatrical work, the notion of ' collaboration ' is totally meaningful. A working collective where ' discussion rather than authority was the determining factor ' (Dudow). Thus it was a blatant rebuttal of the crude contemporary notions of the cinema, be it that film can never rank as an art since by nature it is a collaborative procedure, or even that film is the only intrinsically, naturally collaborative art (Kracauer).

Indeed, such a working collective could only arise in a production structure which did not challenge the existing one, an absurd utopia – the experiment of _Kuhle Wampe_ was very much conceived as unique – but rather the very function of film:

' Naturally, the organisation of the work was a much greater effort for us than the (artistic) work itself, ie, we came more and more to treat organisation as an essential component of artistic labour. This was only possible because the work as a whole was political work ' (Collective presentation of the film, see above).

5. In the spring of 1931, Dudow submitted the first draft of a script to Brecht. He had already collaborated with him on the _Baden-Baden Didactic Play_, the script _The Welt_, which was rejected by the producers of the _Threepenny Opera_ film, and _Die Massnahme_, put on in December 1930. The script tells of an unemployed worker's suicide and of his family's subsequent attempts to avoid despair.

1930 was the year of the lawsuit against the producers of the _Threepenny Opera_ film and of a number of didactic plays. In 1931 the activities of the group gathered around Brecht moved towards expanding and developing the notion of the didactic play. This was later superseded by the elaboration of the epic form.

The initial communal work on the script followed soon after Brecht and Dudow had produced a revival of _A Man's a Man_ in Berlin. Likewise, the shooting was to be contemporary with the collective writing of _The Mother_.

This first version of the script has been preserved.[12] It includes two of the three major parts of the finished film:
' one less unemployed ' – an unemployed worker's quarrel with

his father, who is also out of work, and his suicide. 'The young man in question, before he threw himself from the window, took off his watch so as not to destroy it' (ibid);

'the ideal life for a young person' – on eviction, the family takes refuge in a camp site on the outskirts of Berlin, Kuhle Wampe. 'There the girl gets pregnant and under pressure from the lumpen-petit bourgeois relations dominant in the site (a kind of " posses-sion " of the land and the payment of a small pension create characteristic social forms), the young couple become engaged' (ibid).

As with several of Brecht's scripts, collected in the volumes of his Texte für Filme,[13] this particular version can be seen to func-tion as a figured bass. The tale is there (and so is most of the dia-logue of the first part), but in the form of a continuous dramatic narrative. There are no ellipses, no external elements: the mon-tage, the insertion of documents are virtually absent. There is but one indication of (traditional) montage during the removal to Kuhle Wampe (in the film another solution was in fact adopted), and a few 'inserts' of external material: an advertising hoarding for 'Fromm's Act', which was shot and then cut by the censors who considered it to 'indicate all too clearly what the young couple might have done to avoid the problems their liaison had given rise to ';[14] the reading in a 'dry tone' of paragraph 218, the legislation against abortion, which was also cut by the censors; and the story of the spy Mata Hari.

The lacunae in this first script give some idea of the type of intervention Brecht and his co-operative made upon the story. 'Foreign elements' were to abound: informative and ideological inserts, which are simultaneously indications, allusions and rhyth-mic pauses. Benjamin's definition (The Author as Producer) re-quires complementation:

'This uncovering of the conditions is effected by interrupting the
dramatic processes; but such interruption does not act as a
stimulant; it has an organising function. It brings the action to a
standstill in mid-course and thereby compels the spectator to take
up a position towards the action. . . . Let me give an example to
show how Brecht, in his selection and treatment of the Gestisch,
simply uses the method of montage – which is so essential to radio
and film.'[15]

Montage here means the very process by which a new dramatic art relocates actors and story within a chain of causality, and the spectator's interest is no longer aroused by harmonising with his emotions, but through recognition – of reality – and of what is at stake in that reality. The cinematic process itself is but one of the modalities of that construction principle, its most frequent appli-cation being the inclusion of material that resists the fiction: legal

paragraphs, news items, an agit-prop scene miming the family being evicted, and also the sequences of 'intellectual montage' that were to develop in the film and determine its new economy: 'self-contained pieces of music accompanied by images of apartment blocks, factories and landscapes' (Collective presentation, above). The autonomy of the various elements creates their global meaning: that of the montage sequences on the same basis as that of the three ballads that punctuate the film.

Music with words ('music without words,' says Eisler, 'acquired its great importance and its full development only under capitalism ')[16] – songs and ballads – also represents a unit which is in contradiction with the other units in the film, an active function more significant than the words themselves: 'We intervened in everyday life; were something new to happen, Brecht would be the first to call me: "We ought to do something " . . .' (Eisler).

The composer's contribution to the shaping of the shooting-script seems to have been of paramount importance, and is confirmed in an article in *Film Kurier* devoted to this now lost script.[17]

6. For the first time since *Drums in the Night*, one of Brecht's dramatic works was set in contemporary Germany. The previous attempt, *The Bread Shop*, had remained a fragment.

The songs in *Kuhle Wampe* form a significant part of the production. Some (eg the ' Solidarity Song ') were popular before the film's release; others, which were not used, remain only as poems. Like an incomplete play, a poem may be a fragment; a fragment may have power in itself. The epic form is founded on this unit: a scene becomes a fragment. The key situation in *Kuhle Wampe* (the eviction), described in the agit-prop piece performed by the Rote Sprachrohr, is a ' state of fact ' (note, moreover, that this actual moment was not in the first script); the juxtaposition of such ' states of fact ' (or *Gestus*, or elements of montage as Benjamin calls them) allowed Dudow-Brecht-Ottwald-Eisler to represent reality taking shape, in other words as malleable. Thus the project took on totalisatory proportions: a dialectic of the revolution, not in the historical idiom (*The Mother*) but in the modern idiom.

7. At a moment when access to the ' apparatus ' (professional theatres, radio, cinema) was more and more definitely barred to those works that represented the viewpoint of the proletariat and its allies, the political task was no longer the one the didactic plays had set themselves: ' These productions were put on less for the spectators than for the participants; it was less an art for consumers than one for producers.'[18] The epic form of *The Mother* and *Kuhle Wampe* was no longer directed solely at sympathisers, a subjective criterion, but – and this is an objective criterion – to those who are not exploiters (' even if the entire world does not

feel concerned by Communism, Communism nevertheless is concerned with the whole world ').[19]

It is therefore significant that when *Kuhle Wampe* was screened in cinemas in Berlin and its suburbs in June 1932, it was the last public showing of one of Brecht's works in pre-fascist Germany. The stake of this new ' sociological experiment' did not allow for the irony of the ' Threepenny Lawsuit '; any lesson could only be drawn from the film insofar as it was actually distributed. The question to answer, though, concerned the use of the cinema in a political struggle and the comparative impact of the theatre and the cinema; moreover, in theoretical terms, the film being held up by the censors represented an absolute loss.

Two final remarks:
– the place Brecht assigned the cinema. The production of *Kuhle Wampe* contradicts the accepted view that Brecht's interventions in that field were only occasional and/or disastrous (a man of words, he is supposed not to have understood this art of the image . . .). Yet precisely in an occasional work, Brecht would act as a function of the occasion, as he always did; his dramatic work as a screen writer also fulfilled above all a strategic function. Note here two passages from his *Arbeitsjournal* (Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt 1973): the precise account of his efforts in Hollywood, of his relations with Fritz Lang, testify to an exemplary attempt to use capitalist apparatus for progressive ends (and not just to earn a living alongside the merchants of lies). And in the DDR, his ' positive critical ' attitude toward the new-born DEFA (national film industry), showing no indulgence and forever offering suggestions.
– the need for a new criticism to deal with the new dramatic art was even more blatant in the cinema than in the theatre – where the ' policeman had become the critic most interested ' in revolutionary drama. This was Brecht's intention in *A Small Contribution to the Theme of Realism* which, although it ought to be quoted in full,[20] deals with the.censor's special interest in the significance of *Kuhle Wampe* vis-à-vis the public and in the political effectiveness of its montage, noting in particular that the film induced a critical attitude. Indeed, the cuts affected precisely the montage elements, not the action; and the censor's reproaches on ' aesthetic grounds ' (Brecht's account is not in the least idealised – see the protocols of the censorship, which are a good example of scientific criticism)[21] were the ones that involved the causal relations the film unmasked, ie, the significance of an aesthetic within a given society. What was under discussion then, too, was decided by a mass action, was (still is: Jean-Marie Straub's *History Lesson*, taken from *The Affairs of Mr Julius Caesar*) ' becoming-popular ' as much as ' being-popular '.

.

1. I shall refer to Werner Hecht and Wolfgang Gersch, eds, *Kuhle Wampe, Protokoll des Films und Materialen,* Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt 1969. The edition which appeared in the DDR in 1971 (Reclam, Leipzig) is considerably more complete.

1a. 'Answer to O A H Schmitz' *Literarische Welt,* Jg3 no 10, March 11, 1927, pp 7-8.

2. Gilbert Badia: *La Fin de la République allemande,* Editions Sociales, Paris 1958.

3. See Ludwig Hoffmann and Daniel Hoffmann-Ostwald: *Deutsches Arbeitertheater 1918-1933, eine Dokumentation,* Berlin 1961 – *Editor's note.*

4. On this point Willi Münzenberg's little book *Erobert den Film!* (1925) should be analysed, and also the Japanese experience of *Pro-Kino,* which, according to Sadoul, worked in 16mm film at the end of the 1920's. [Münzenberg's book has been reprinted in *Materialistische Wissenschaft* no 7, Berlin 1973, pp 75-105 – *Editor's note.*]

5. *Hunger in Waldenburg,* dir Piel Jutzi, 1924, *Jensseits der Strasse,* dir Leo Mittler, 1929, *Mutter Krausens Fahrt ins Glück,* dir Piel Jutzi, 1929 – *Editor's note.*

6. Bernard Reich: 'Erinnerungen an den jungen Brecht,' *Sinn und Form,* Jg 9, Heft 1, 2, 3, 1957, *Zweites Sonderheft Bertolt Brecht,* pp 434-5.

7. XVIII, 51.

8. XX, 46.

9. Bertolt Brecht: 'Popularity and Realism,' *New Left Review* no 84, March-April 1974, p 52.

10. Information drawn from Hermann Herlinghaus: 'Slatan Dudow – sein Frühwerk,' *Filmwissenschaftliche Mitteilungen,* Berlin, 1962 no 4. The same number contains the censorship protocols about *Kuhle Wampe.*

11. *Kuhle Wampe Protokoll,* op cit, p 179.

12. Cf *ibid,* pp 83-8.

13. Ed Wolfgang Gersch and Werner Hecht, Berlin-Weimar 1971, two volumes.

14. *Kuhle Wampe Protokoll,* op cit, p 139.

15. Walter Benjamin: *Understanding Brecht,* NLB, London 1973, p 100.

16. Cit Walter Benjamin, *ibid,* p 96.

17. *Film Kurier,* Berlin, August 13, 1931.

18. Bertolt Brecht: 'Das Deutsche Theater der zwanziger Jahre,' XV, 239. Cf 'The German Drama: Pre-Hitler,' *Left Review,* Vol II, July 1936, pp 504-8 – *Editor's note.*

19. 'Anmerkungen zur Mutter,' XVII, 1064-5.

20. Here cited in full above – *Editor's note.*

21. *Kuhle Wampe Protokoll,* op cit, pp 103-39.

translated by Kari Hanet

From Shklovsky to Brecht: Some preliminary remarks towards a history of the politicisation of Russian Formalism

·Stanley Mitchell

The aim of this article is to specify the relationship between Shklovsky's ·notion of *ostranenie* (making-strange) and Brecht's *Verfremdung,* which has immediately the same meaning. What is the point of such an enquiry? Shklovsky was a Formalist who later committed himself to Marxism, although never in a way which fundamentally reconstructed his thinking.[1] He proposed the notions of *making-strange* and *art-as-a-device* before the Revolution and before the Soviet nineteen-twenties forced upon him a political and philosophical re-orientation. Brecht was already a Marxist when he developed his idea of *Verfremdung,* a technique aimed at jolting the consciousness of his auditors and making them critically aware of contradiction in society. What have the two concepts in common?

That the same word was chosen cannot be *pure* accident, for the term has similarities of implication. In both theories the (proper) role of art is seen as one of de-routinisation, de-automatisation: art is the enemy of habit; it renews, refreshes our perceptions; by ' making-strange ', it defamiliarises. But while Shklovsky's *ostranenie* was a purely aesthetic concept, concerned with renewal of perception, Brecht's *Verfremdung* had a social aim: if the world could be shown differently, ie, as having different possibilities, could it not be differently made? Brecht wished to strike not merely at the perceptions, but at the consciousness of his spectators. Shklovsky expressly denied the cognitive function of art: ' the aim of art,' he wrote, ' is to give the sensation of a thing as something known.' Does the comparison end there?

*   *   *

European capitalism, entering its imperialist phase, posed anew the problem of boredom, captured in Baudelaire's images of *ennui.* Technological production and reproduction were mechanising and stereotyping the everyday. As an antidote the new capitalism invested in novelty on a hitherto unprecedented scale. The investment proved profitable because novelty is quickly exhausted. With the arrival of finance capitalism the pace of renewal galloped. Society became more ' subjective ': the class which had distinguished itself historically by its constant need to revolutionise its instruments of production now, in its parasitic phase, turned more and more neurotically to ' revolutionising ' its means of consumption. ' Serious ' art reflected this development, passing through the most rapid succession of schools and styles ever known. Philosopher and novelist discovered an ' anti-mechanical ' time (Bergson's *durée,* Proust's memory). Futurists fetishised dynamics and

speed. Painters and poets plundered the colonies for 'direct'
emotions or timeless conditions (Gauguin, Picasso, Baudelaire,
Rimbaud). Each innovation was assimilated and mass-reproduced.

Marx analysed this socio-cultural process in terms of ' alienation '
and ' fetishism of commodities '. The producer is denied enjoyment
of his labour which he sells to be marketed as commodities enter-
ing into a seemingly autonomous economic system. The market
economy is experienced as something naturally-unnatural, familiarly-
alien until class struggle can lay bare the social relations of capital
and labour which underly its mystifying ' objectivity '.

* * *

The Formalist *making-strange* is one of the many devices used by
artists and theorists to take a ' crack ' at the ' objectivity ' of
capitalist society and consciousness. Where the Russian Symbolists
had sought refuge in transcendentalism, the Formalists by contrast
(and in counter-attack) appropriated technology to literary critic-
ism, arguing that literature was one of a complex of interrelating
' systems ' or ' series ' making up the totality of society. Each of
these systems had its specific autonomy. The science of literary
analysis lay in the establishment of *literaturnost'*, ie what was
literary about literature. The Formalists understood the history of
literature in terms of formal self-parody. Against the ' autonomy '
and ' objectivity ' of society as a whole they posed the specific
autonomy of literature and art and the ' objectivity ' of their
attendant ' sciences '. Yet however ' objectively ' the Formalists
treated their subject-matter, excluding the author from considera-
tion, their deliberations were resonant with subjectivity:

' The device which art uses is the device of " making things strange "
and of complicating the form, thereby increasing the difficulty and
length of perception so that the perceiving process becomes an
end-in-itself and has to be prolonged. Art is a means of experiencing
the making of a thing: what is made in art is unimportant.'
(Shklovsky)

Formalist aesthetics is Kantian, topped with modern phenomeno-
logy (Husserl was an influence: one sees in Shklovsky's formulation
how the ' what ' of a work of art can be ' bracketed ', leaving the
prolonged perceptual experience). Formalism is a perceptual aesthe-
tics, at once mathematically analytical and hedonistic, ie concerned
with the maximum prolongation of the aesthetic experience.

The shift from object to subject, from representation to percep-
tion, the turning of perception into a new form of object – all this
is characteristic of modern European art and art theory. It provides
the artist and theorist with a new ' freedom ': perception from
being a way of seeing the world becomes the object of representa-
tion. Or to put it another way: the ' what ' of representations turns
into the ' how '. ' Reality ', the meaningfulness of the external world,
is questioned as never before. The very term ' reality ' undergoes

a relativisation and subjectivisation' (eg 'my reality', 'your reality'). The ontological status of reality is relegated to meta-physics and replaced by the tangible and 'authentic' 'raw material of the perceptions' (eg Machism) which can be constructed into new forms of meaning seemingly at will. In fact, the new 'freedom' belongs with the reification of consciousness, diagnosed by Lukács in *History and Class Consciousness*, which turns perceptions from processes into things, 'ends-in-themselves' as Shklovsky calls them. The battle 'against' capitalist alienation is waged on many fronts ('against' in quotation marks because the product of the battle often turns out to be another form of alienation, a sub-system within the main system). So it was with Formalism, caught between (perceptual) objectivism and hedonism.

<div align="center">*   *   *</div>

It is only within this broad context that one can begin to make use of the coincidence between Shklovsky's and Brecht's terms, *ostranenie* and *Verfremdung*.[2] These terms capture the theoretical imagination because they strike at their objective homonym, ie the alienation of consciousness which is the reflex of capitalism. Capi-talist dialectics 'domesticate' this alienation. The resisting theore-tical and artistic consciousness seeks to unmask, make alien the alienation. But the intellectual and artistic consciousness does not revolt merely out of wounded dignity. Russian Formalism came into being during the first world war and on the eve of the Bolshevik Revolution; some of its personalities, though not the main ones, were Bolsheviks. Brecht developed his theory of alienation on the eve of the fascist counter-revolution as a means to shock people out of a passive-fatalistic acceptance of authoritarian and manipula-tive politics. If, in the general European context, we draw a line back from Brecht and forward from Shklovsky, we shall find a meeting-point. In the 1920s the Russian Formalists joined forces with the left Futurists to produce the magazine and forum of *LEF* and *Novy Lef*, edited by Mayakovsky. Brecht's 'epic theatre' drew inspiration from Piscator, Meyerhold and Eisenstein. The various theories and practices of montage, functional theatre, documentary may all be brought under the head of *making-strange*. Russian Formalism was politicised. The theorems of 'making strange', 'exposing the device' were applied sociologic-ally and politically to the writer's craft (or rather production) and his place in society. The formalist-sociologists (known as *forsotsi*) argued that the writer should engage with his 'material' no differently from a worker in a factory, for he was no more than a literary producer. So down with inspiration, creativity, illusion: these were the manifestations of bourgeois and class culture which used artists as a special élite to satisfy the needs of a ruling class which had no wish to see itself in reality, ie as an exploiting class. To this end, went the argument, art mystified reality into *estab-*

lished reality, reality as seen and desired by the ruling class.
Positivism and realism were the intellectual and artistic props of
the bourgeois order.

But the left ' Formalists ' confused two things here: on the one
hand the use of illusion or representation as such, on the other
their use in the service of an ideology. Aristotle's theory of mimesis,
for example, is not a class concept, although obviously it had a
social origin and was put to class use (eg only characters of such
and such social standing could do the representing). But more
important than this confusion was the carry-over of the old neo-
Kantianism into artistic-political thinking, according to which
' reality ' could never be seen ' as it was ', but only as it was seen.
Ontology, we remarked earlier, was dismissed as a problem. But
this left open the question: who demystifies the demystifiers?
which is the more correct or better or more preferable ' way of
seeing ' and according to what criterion? Formalists and Prolet-
kultists alike stood by this way of thinking, whatever their enmity
to each other. Both, in their different ways, reversed Marx's formula
that consciousness depended on social existence.

Left avant-garde art everywhere in the nineteen-twenties con-
centrated on an aesthetics of shock. It was only as an aesthetics of
realism came to predominate in the Soviet Union that Communist
or would-be Marxist writers like Brecht were forced to revise their
thinking and practice. I have in mind here not the external political
pressure, but a meaningful Marxist concept of realism. In the Stalin
period Marxist notions went hand in hand with completely distort-
ing malpractices. It is certain, for example, that the notion of
Socialist Realism was truer in principle to Marx's relationship of
consciousness to existence than the theories of the avant-garde.
But Stalin's manipulative politics turned it into an ' objectivist '
theory serving to confirm every Party dictate and change of course
and using an equally ' subjectivist ' rhetoric of exhortation. The
Diktat from above, though pretending to respond to democratic
pressures from below, once again reversed Marx's formula.

Brecht, living outside the Soviet Union (unlike many other Com-
munist emigrés), never formally a member of the German Com-
munist Party, was able to tackle the problem of realism freely and
in principle. In his early ' epic' theatre ' he sought to produce a
direct effect upon his audience by means of the *Verfremdungs-
technik.* I cannot correlate here the changes in his theory and
practice, but his essays and theoretical fragments of the thirties
increasingly designate the task of art as that of laying bare a
' causal network ' in a specifiable and cognisable reality ' out there '.
No longer is it the ' laying bare ' of the devices of art that matters:
that becomes a side-issue, product of a *petit-bourgeois* revolt
against *haut-bourgeois* aesthetic consumption. More important
than puncturing the ' illusions ' of the theatre and the other arts
was to use every formal means discovered by the avant-garde to

reveal the workings of capitalist society, to demonstrate the mechanisms of social conditioning so that these appeared no longer fixed, but changeable in a rational way. Arguing against the later Lukács's version of realism, with its bases in the nineteenth-century novel (Balzac, Tolstoy), Brecht called for a sovereignty of models. The demand applied equally to the narrow anti-illusionism of the avant-garde. For what did realism mean, asked Brecht, if not the uncovering of reality, that is the causal nexus of the socio-economic world, and to that end all devices were legitimate, from within the traditional forms of art and outside. Capitalist theatre and film have been able to debase Brechtian theatre into the stereotype of the alienation-effect simply because avant-garde theory and practice have deployed so much of their ' artistic politics ' against bourgeois *forms*. Yet ' sending up ' a means of representation is one of the oldest and most easily assimilable ' devices ' of the capitalist entertainment industry. Parody, as the Formalists showed, is the form *par excellence* of novelty.

Of all the ' modernist ' theories Brecht's *Verfremdung* constituted the most appropriate response to capitalist alienation. It was an attempt to ' negate the negation ' in terms of the spectator's consciousness. But like all avant-garde theories the programme was (initially) too prescriptive and exclusive, and too ·rationalistic. It was one thing, for example, to ' demonstrate ' the mechanism of social conditioning, and another to produce socially-rooted and credible characters. Brecht's later practice and theory depart from the earlier didacticism and, in his last years, we find him toying with the notion of a ' dialectical theatre ' to replace the older ' epic '. ' Dialectical ' is a broader term, embracing more than the shock tactics of *Verfremdung*, uniting demonstration with a new understanding of representation. The term ' dialectical ' needs elaboration, which is difficult because Brecht only hints at what he has in mind. He is combining, and transcending, the two main streams of revolutionary art: on the one hand the Russian avant-gardism of the nineteen-twenties, which put its emphasis on production; on the other the realist tradition, ' critical ' and ' socialist ', which emphasised reflection. Brecht seeks a *productive* realism:

' Objectivist representations disregard the subjective moment, the
will of the representer who aims at the constant productive
alteration of the conditions and circumstances given to him.
Objectivist representations offer no impulse for change and
development.'

*   *   *

Mayakovsky described the Formalist contribution to literary theory as a ' higher mathematics '. In a similar vein he wrote of Khlebnikov's work as a poetry for producers (poets) rather than consumers. Brecht underlined the need to utilise the techniques invented by the (bourgeois) avant-garde, arguing (against the

' official ' Marxists) that a technique could not be regarded as the
direct expression of an ideology. On the contrary, a technique like
a physical tool was an instrument of production. Brecht takes up
here the Formalist inheritance. At the same time literature could
not be defined as ' pure ' production; it was also ideological.
Brecht's application of *Verfremdung* to the *social* mechanism sums
up an entire history of the (socialist) politicisation of Shklovsky's
original notion of *ostranenie*, a history which remains to be written
and should put together in the most profitable way the relation-
ship between Marxism and the artistic avant-garde of the twentieth
century. Shklovsky's initial essay *Art as a Device* (1916) may be
read, if we ' bracket ' its ideology *à la* Husserl, as a ' paradigm '
for Brecht's mature writings on literature, in particular for the
Little Organon for the Theatre. Here, as in Shklovsky's piece, art
is shown to renew our contact with the material world. Taking a
thing out of one context and putting it in another, so to examine
it afresh, gives us tangibility (Shklovsky) and knowledge (Brecht).
Insight into a how a thing works, whether this is literature or
society, lends a sense of mastery and pleasure: no materialism
without sensuality, insists Brecht. What was perceptual aesthetics
for Shklovsky becomes materialist with Brecht.

*   *   *

To resume: Brecht's use of the idea of *Verfremdung* is a splendid
example of his own advice to socialist writers. Referring to Joyce,
Döblin, Kafka, he wrote:

' It is precisely Socialist writers who are able to learn highly-
developed technical elements from these documents of despair.
They see the way out. Many models are necessary; the most
instructive is comparison.'

The technical elements which Brecht lists are: interior monologue
(Joyce), stylistic alternation (Joyce), dissociation of elements
(Döblin, Dos Passos), associative writing (Joyce, Döblin), news-
montage (Dos Passos), alienation (Kafka).

Notes

1. The Formalist ' patterning ', the theoretical ' tropes ' remain, even in
   his most recent work, if anything coming out there more clearly:
   older men tend to return to the ' innovations ' of their youth, and
   the present is more propitious for revindicating (albeit critically) the
   achievements of Formalism. Shklovsky's self-criticism is undoubtedly
   genuine. What he does, however, is superimpose the antithetical
   categories of Formalism upon the dialectical ones of Marxism. He
   ' aligns ' himself with Marxism rather than becoming Marxist.
   Nevertheless – and this matters for the present article – Shklovsky's
   self-criticism leads him to support Brecht's version of the theory of
   ' estrangement '.
      In *Art as a Device* (1916) (see above) Shklovsky had defined the
   purpose of ' making-strange ' as ' the renewal of perception/sensa-
   tion ' (the Russian word *oshchushchenie* means both). *What* was

perceived did not matter. Recently (1970) he commented: 'I should have asked myself: what were you proposing to make strange if art did not express reality? The sensation of what did Sterne or Tolstoy wish to restore?

'The theory of estrangement which has been accepted by many, including Brecht, speaks of art as knowledge, as a means of investigation.'

This later emendation is bland insofar as Formalism grew philosophically out of neo-Kantianism, that is out of a reaction against nineteenth-century positivism. Like the Machians and the phenomenologists (Husserl and his Russian interpreter, Shpet) who influenced them, the last thing the Formalists were prepared to do was take 'reality' on trust.

Despite Shklovsky's self-corrections, or perhaps because of their unproblematical character, because of his 'accommodation' to Marxism, it is not surprising that it was not he who politicised Formalism. The yeast of his work lies in his Formalist period proper, the later adjustments are only 'Marxist' leaven.

Formalism could only be politicised by those who responded to the original Formalist challenge. Marxists in the twenties and thirties divided themselves into heirs of the Second International, who took a determinist, evolutionary view of history, and Leninists, or if not Leninists, then those who stressed the subjective factor, that is the need to uncover and specify the main contradictions of social development and to try as hard as possible to make them go your way (without, like Stalin, doing violence to their objectivity and necessity). The Formalists had formalised contradiction. The point was to give life to their formalisations. This Mayakovsky did in his poetry and Brecht in his plays. The techniques of neologistic rhyme, montage, *Verfremdung* were means of 'bombarding' reality to discover its possibilities, to specify its contradictions, to make it go 'your way'.

2. The question of a *direct* link between the two terms has been a matter of much dispute. Shklovsky took a mild rapping from the literary bureaucrats in the Soviet Union for suggesting a connection between them. Likewise, East German studies on Brecht steadfastly deny any relationship. On the other hand, Western critics of all brands have been quick to point out the link: for the right it is a way of deMarxising Brecht; for the left largely a means of distancing him from a 'realistic' aesthetic (see above). In the present article I have sought to show that the left has another and more profitable choice, Brecht's own: that of 'refunctioning', to use his word, the insights and discoveries of the 'avant-garde'.

    A recent book of memoirs from East Germany, by the late Bernhard Reich, a theatre director who spent many years in Russia, confirms the suggestion put forward by many people, including Ben Brewster in *Screen*, v 12, n 4, that it was Tretyakov (one of the editors of *LEF*) who reshaped Shklovsky's original idea and, as it were, handed over the term to Brecht. Fortunately, we do not have to rely on biographical evidence, however inviting, to establish the connection between Brecht's and Shklovsky's term: as we have argued above, it is the general context that counts. But the memoir is worth quoting because it both supports and illuminates the contentions of this article. Reich recalls sitting with Tretyakov and Brecht in the former's Moscow flat and discussing a theatre performance; it was 1935:

' I was referring to a production detail when Tretyakov corrected me, remarking: " Yes, that is an estrangement (*Verfremdung*) ' and looked conspiratorially at Brecht. Brecht nodded. That was the first time I had met the expression *Verfremdung*. I must assume therefore that Tretyakov provided Brecht with the term. I think that Tretyakov had reshaped the term originally formulated by Shklovsky, *otchuzdenie*, " distancing ", " alienation " [Reich confuses *ostranenie* with the similar-meaning *otchuzhdenie*].

' Brecht's *Verfremdung* aims at " making-aware ". Shklovsky and his followers were recommending this " making aware " mainly for the cinema, seeing it as a way of arousing a strong impression in the spectators by means of an extremely formal juxtaposition. Despite the semantic similarity Brecht's conception differs from this quite fundamentally both with regard to its point of departure (" making-aware " in Brecht is a logical necessity since habit and familiarity hinder the recognition of phenomena) and its result (Brecht's estrangement helps one to see better the content of things).'
(*Im Wettlauf mit der Zeit*, Berlin 1970, pp 371-2).

Ben Brewster

Stanley Mitchell's argument can be broadly resumed as follows:
(a) Formalist theory emerged in the context and under the in-
fluence of what can be called more or less ' Neo-Kantian ' philo-
sophical currents, whose preoccupations it shared; (b) the theory
of ' socialist realism ' was much closer to a Marxist, materialist
position on the arts, but was unfortunately arbitrarily misapplied
in the 1930's and 1940's, to the detriment of the development of
socialist art; (c) Brecht (and Mayakovsky) adopted notions that
had earlier been used by the formalists, but transformed them in
a Marxist sense, ie, towards a true theory of socialist realism.
    Much of this is perfectly correct. Formalist theory and the
aesthetic views of the ' historical avant-gardes ' with which it was
associated do emerge in close association with those philosophical
currents that can be roughly characterised as ' Neo-Kantian ', ie,
that propounded some form of critique of rationalism and posi-
tivism in the name of the subject, and they use their concepts and
terminology.[1] It is also true that those members of the avant-
garde who linked themselves to the proletarian revolution such as
Brecht and Mayakovsky (though other names should be added –
notably that of Eisenstein), transformed the aesthetic concepts they
derived from their avant-garde origins. However, the second thesis
is, I believe, totally incorrect, and obscures what is correct about
the first and third. To attack it directly would require an explica-
tion of the various theses lined up at various times behind the
slogan ' socialist realism ' and, more important and more difficult,
an analysis of the political significance to be attributed to its
application at different times. I cannot undertake this here, so I
shall content myself with demonstrating that a Marxist approach
to the concepts of the formalists does not require a rapproche-
ment between them and any traditional theory of ' realism ',
rather the reverse, and that the modifications made in formalist
theory and avant-garde practice to bring it into line with the
proletarian revolution were of quite a different character.

I

Insofar as the charge of Neo-Kantianism is a question of guilt by
association, association with a trend of thought authoritatively
condemned by Lenin, the obvious response is a simple *tu quoque*.
The version of Marxism, drawn from Lukács's *History and Class
Consciousness*, that serves Stanley Mitchell as a touchstone
throughout his text, comes from precisely the same intellectual
background, and bears the marks of this its origin to this day.[2]

Turning to more substantive arguments advanced by Stanley Mitchell, these can be reduced essentially to two. First, the charge that Shklovsky's aesthetics is one of perception, not one of cognition. This is linked to the Machist thesis that all that is real is our perceptions and the choice between one or other theoretical elaboration of these perceptions is a relative one. Hence the second charge: in the attempt to unite formalist theory with the construction of socialism in the USSR, the question became, how, through art, to move from a bourgeois theoretical elaboration of our perceptions to a socialist one; but this definition of the struggle for socialism reverses the order of consciousness and being postulated by Marxism.

In *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* (1908), Lenin attacked the Russian Machists, particularly Bogdanov, as subjective idealists (an attack extended in the *Philosophical Notebooks*, 1914-16, to the whole Kantian philosophical tradition). The central point of this attack was that in postulating an essential limit to human knowledge, and hence a realm of the unknowable, Neo-Kantians of every variety provide the grounds for a reconciliation of science with religion or more generally with the ideologies that justify or ' transfigure the existing state of affairs '. As Brecht later summarised it:

' It is very useful to establish the boundaries of knowledge in its
various regions, in order to expand them. . . . But when the
philosophers talk about knowledge, they go both further and not so
far. They are not interested in more or less, but in all or
nothing. . . . They seem thoroughly sceptical, they seem to be
people who are not easily fooled, with the proviso that there is
for them a God or Spirit which can be blindly believed '
(XII, 439-40).

However, to assert that cognition of the real is possible is not to assert that we spontaneously see the world as it is. Conversely, it is not impossible to argue that reality can never be seen as it is but only as it is seen and yet that reality can be known as it is. The theories of the modern physical sciences have made us perfectly familiar with certain knowledge of a type that cannot be encapsulated in the consciousness implied by a term like ' seeing '. It is noteworthy that the Neo-Hegelian tendencies that moved on from Neo-Kantianism to occupy the empty space of the thing-in-itself abandoned nature as an irrecuperable alienation of the spirit, only appropriatable by man in a lower type of conventional, intellectual knowledge; they then disputed whether history can totally overcome its alienation, as in the early Lukács's unity of subject and object in the assigned proletarian class consciousness, or whether man is condemned by his natural, biological instincts, to the insuperable discontents of civilisation, as in Adorno. If modern natural-scientific knowledge is granted full rights as

knowledge, indeed is taken as the model of knowledge in general, there is no need to attribute the opacity of society to its conversion by capitalist ' reification ' into a ' second nature '. The rejection of all forms of absolute knowledge, of any identification between cognition, truth and consciousness, is one of the common grounds of Marxism and one wing of the historical avant-garde, not a lapse into Neo-Kantian agnosticism.[3]

However, even if it were necessarily Neo-Kantian to engage in a critique of perceptions with respect to scientific knowledge, this verdict could not be extended unreservedly to the formalists, who were engaged in a critique of signs with respect to art, and to literature in particular. In this enterprise, however, they can be linked to another critique of the sign, that of Edmund Husserl, and Roman Jakobson in particular has always acknowledged this link. As he put it in 1933:

' The second half of the nineteenth century was the epoch of a brusque inflation of linguistic signs. . . . The cultural manifestations most typical of this period are borne by the effort to conceal this inflation at any price and to raise confidence in the word, the paper word, by all possible means. . . . And now! Modern phenomenology systematically unmasks linguistic fictions and lucidly reveals the fundamental difference between the sign and the object signified, the signification of a word and the content aimed at by this signification.'[4]

In the first of his *Logical Investigations* (2nd ed 1913), Husserl analyses the sign (*Zeichen*), bracketing off the referential or indicative aspect (*Anzeichen*) and the material, phonic or graphic realisation from the meaning (*Bedeutung*) which is identical in all repetitions of the sign and present to itself in the transcendental subject. This applies not just to individual signs but to compound signs, ie, grammatical concatenations of signs, such that the grammatical structure of everyday language has a corresponding transcendental pure logical grammar. If the formalists had simply taken over this theory of the sign, they could certainly be charged with belonging to another current of the ideology of absolute knowledge.[5] But the line of descent is not so straightforward. The futurists were also influenced by the linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure. Saussure made the same distinction between sign and referent, between the meaning of a sign and its use. But this meaning was not defined by presence and identity to itself in the transcendental subject, but by value, ie, by the difference between the sign and all the other signs that might occupy the same position. Moreover, defined by absence, value is a pre-eminently unconscious category, and unconsciousness is a concept phenomenology cannot ultimately admit. Shklovsky's ' bracketing ' of the referent in ' Art as a Device '[6] is not essentially phenomenological because it is not a transcendental reduction, concentrating as it does on

aspects of the sign Husserl would have discarded. Thus for Husserl ' abracadabra ' is the type of nonsense (Unsinn),[7] whereas glossolalia of all kinds were of crucial importance to the trans-sense poetry of Khlebnikov, and it is one of the merits of formal-ist theory that it was invented, so to speak, to justify Khlebnikov's poetry. According to a recent essay by Jakobson, it was not chapter one of the first Investigation, on meaning and indication, but chapter four, on the idea of a pure grammar, that most influenced the formalists.[8] A detailed comparison between Husserl's views and those of the Russian linguists and poeticians remains to be carried out; but it can be said that this emphasis on a natural grammar, and hence on universal properties of language, has constantly softened the total opposition between langue and parole, synchrony and diachrony, and the emphasis on the total arbitrariness of the sign which could be inferred from Saussure's Course in General Linguistics.[9]

One last broadly ' Neo-Kantian ' current with which Shklovsky's position might be associated should be noted. This is a develop-ment of Simmel's ' tragedy of culture '. For Simmel, individual subjects can only communicate by alienating themselves in forms, which precisely lack the informal character of subjective experi-ence. Hence all culture is more or less alienated. By a dialectical paradox an extra formalisation, an extreme of alienation can better convey the subject's feelings. Hence a theory of disauto-matisation by making-strange. It is instructive to compare Shklovsky here with Ardengo Soffici in his futurist phase.

' No work of art is a work of art unless it is able to communicate
(even if only to the narrowest group of initiates) the emotion
felt by its author, and such emotion can only be communicated
by means of recognisable forms, apt to arouse a certain vision
and not another.'
' Analysing pure sensation, which in our aesthetic is the prime
basis of art, one could say – we come to find that it is at bottom
nothing but a prolonged surprise at a reality that reveals itself
as always new and unpredictable. To express this surprise, to
communicate it by signs and relations is thus both the necessity
and the prime aim of the artist.'
   ' The whole universe, everything, every event, every act, every
aspect of the phenomenon, every gesture is in fine a miracle. The
majority of men, whose sensory system has been blunted,
atrophied, made torpid by continuous use and habit live in the
midst of this arcanum as if in a system of commonplaces, as if
in an organisation of repetitions, false identities, ordinary
contingencies, obtuse and vulgar practicisms; of routines
and à-peu-près. Only the occasional rare privileged individual,
endowed with a greater and more persistent impressionability,
capable of prolonging the infantile, virgin state of the senses

and the mind within him, is up to perceiving the infinite gradations, the imperceptible variations, the divine and unprecedented contingency of the mysterious representation.'[10]

Shklovsky clearly does not share the religious empiricism à la Bazin that informs these quotations (if 'Art as a Device' occasionally gives that impression, this is probably because the motivation for the *ostranenie* in the many examples from Tolstoy, a motivation ignored by Shklovsky as inessential, is precisely such a religious empiricism), nor the elitist view of the divinely gifted but isolated artist (a peculiarity of Florentine futurism – the Milanese futurists, notably Marinetti, were a much more popular phenomenon, as Gramsci noted), but the notion of renewing and prolonging sensation by extreme formalism is similar. Something like this view is attributed to the formalists by P N Medvedev in *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship* (1928): having accepted an abstract and objectivist theory of language, the only way they can see for individuals to express themselves in this alien structure is by distorting it.[11] However, the more sophisticated formulations of the notion of *ostranenie* developed by formalists and structuralists later are not open to this charge. For them the disautomatisation function of poetic language is not a relation of individual consciousness to language, but a function of language with respect to itself. To illustrate this, and to sum up the defence of formalism against charges of Neo-Kantianism, I can do no better than to quote once again, at length, from Jakobson's 'What is poetry?':

' Of late criticism thinks it fashionable to stress the uncertainty of what is called the formalist science of literature. It seems that this school does not understand the relations between art and social life, it seems that it promotes *l'art pour l'art* and proceeds in the wake of Kantian aesthetics. The critics who make these objections are, in their radicalism, so consistent and so precipitate that they forget the existence of the third dimension, they see everything in the same plane. Neither Tynyanov, nor Mukařovsky, nor Shklovsky, nor I have preached that art is sufficient unto itself; on the contrary, we show that art is part of the social edifice, a component correlating with the others, a variable component, since the sphere of art and its relationship with other sectors of the social structure ceaselessly changes dialectically. What we stress is not a separation of art, but the autonomy of the aesthetic function.
   ' I have already said that the content of the notion of *poetry* was unstable and varied over time, but the poetic function, *poeticalness*, as the formalists stressed, is an element *sui generis*, an element that cannot be mechanically reduced to other elements. This element must be laid bare and its independence stressed, as the technical devices of cubist paintings, for example, are laid

bare and independent – this is a special case, however, a case
which from the point of view of the dialectics of art has its
raison d'être, but is a special case for all that. In general
poeticalness is no more than one component of a complex
structure, but a component which necessarily transforms the other
elements and determines with them the behaviour of the
whole. . . .

'But how is poeticalness manifested? In that the word is
felt as a word and not as a mere substitute for the named object
or as an explosion of emotion. In that the words and their syntax,
their signification, their external and internal form are not
indifferent indices of reality, but have their own weight and
their own value.

'Why is all this necessary? Why need it be stressed that
the sign is not confused with the object? Because alongside the
immediate awareness of the identity of sign and object (A is A_1),
the immediate awareness of the absence of this identity (A is not
A_1) is necessary; this antinomy is inevitable, for without
contradiction there is no play of concepts, there is no play of
signs, the relation between the concept and the sign becomes
automatic, the course of events ceases and consciousness
of reality dies.'[12]

But it remains to be seen how the contradictory unity of A and
A_1 which restores the 'word as such' subverts the automatisation
of everyday life, the *byt* of the generation (not just in the Soviet
Union of the first five year plan) that 'squandered its poets'.
Two indications can be made, in terms of two positions that go
beyond the formalists, the first in a direct polemic with them, the
other until recently not even thus negatively linked to them. The
'sociological' school of Soviet critics (Medvedev, Voloshinov,
Bakhtin) reasserted the rights of *parole* in all its aspects; in par-
ticular they pointed out that a text refers not just connotatively
to its codes but also anaphorically to the uttering instance, its
interlocutors and their utterances, and that in foregrounding this
the modern poetic text challenges the authority of a tradition of
writing which records the monologues of an absolute conscious-
ness. Colin MacCabe discusses the importance of the 'dialogic'
principle in his article in this issue of *Screen.* The challenge this
implies to the notion that the subject of the text is a transcendental
ego over against writer and reader suggests the second indication.
Remembering Shklovsky's examples in 'Art as a Device' from
erotic poetry, with its closeness to the erotic joke, the *double
entendre,* we should note a distinction Freud draws in *Jokes and
their Relation to the Unconscious* between jokes and dreams, while
emphasising how much they have in common. The remote dis-
placements so characteristic of the dream work evade inhibition
under the pressure of censorship; jokes do not make such extensive

use of displacement, but approach inhibition head on in ' double-sidedness ', ' duplicity of speech ', and this is possible because a joke is funny, ie, not serious. But whereas for the conscious mind dreams are ' nonsense ' and jokes no more than ' funny ', the poetic work, a serious joke, raises the duplicity to such a power that the secure place of the subject in it is challenged, except for a reading which reduces the text to nonsense or humour, character-istic defences against the modern text. This challenge to the sub-ject, in a Freudian perspective, is analysed by Stephen Heath in his article in this issue of *Screen.* These theoretical developments are no more than hinted at in the metaphors of the theorists of the 1920s – ' perception ', ' emotion ', ' psychic commotion ': meta-phors emphasising *parole* against *langue,* polysemy against un-equivocalness. But an outline of the attempt to apply these meta-phors to the politicisation of art is illuminating in relation to the later developments of a political theory of art by Brecht.

                              *   *   *

As Jakobson notes, the art that makes poeticalness the only value, that ' lays bare the device ' absolutely, is only a special case. In ' Art as a Device ', Shklovsky ignores this. In 1919 Jakobson argued that ' if literary studies wish to become a science, they must recognise the *device* as their unique " hero ". Then the basic ques-tion is that of the application, the justification of the device '.[13] For Shklovsky in 1916, the device is the hero of the literary work as well as of literary studies. Hence the lack of clear distinction between these varieties of writing in his own works.[14] In the 1920s in the USSR, the *Lef* group and the ' sociological-formalists ' moved on from Shklovsky's position to consider the ' application, the justification of the device ' in the light of the proletarian revolution.

  This brings us to the second count of Stanley Mitchell's indict-ment of the formalists for Neo-Kantian idealism. Having a rela-tivist, conventionalist view of knowledge, a change in world-view is essentially a shift from one relative position to another, to be achieved by persuasion, propaganda. In fact, the Marxist formalists were attempting to inscribe their practice within the terms of the notion of cultural revolution, surely an authoritative concept of Marxism-Leninism. A transformation of ideological relations must accompany the transformations of the relations of production and productive forces for the transition to communism to be success-ful. Since formalism denied that art was a mode of cognition, these theorists did not regard its role as that of providing and propa-gandising an alternative world-view, assisting in the development of a proletarian class-consciousness in Lukács's sense. Rather its aim was to transform men's relation to their conditions of existence – the various forms of their reflection on these conditions of existence – ie, to change the position of the subject within ideology. The horizon of this transformation was the abolition of

the social division between mental and manual labour.

Thus Tretyakov argued that futurism's contribution to the revolution was that it had always represented a new feeling for the world.

' By the concept " feeling for the world " we understand, as opposed to understanding of the world or world-view which are based on knowledge, on a logical system – the sum of emotional evaluations that man creates for himself. Evaluations that lie on the plane of sympathy and antipathy, comradeship and enmity, joy and sorrow, fear and courage, however difficult it may often be to define logically the very complex weave of the origins and instigations which form these feelings. No kind of understanding of the world is living that has not been fused into a feeling for the world, that has not become a living, driving force which determines all activity, the appearance of all the everyday life (*byt*) of man.'[15]

The opposition between cognition and emotion expressed in this passage is a commonplace of the period;[16] it defined the terms of the polemic between Voronsky and the On Guard group, as well as later the differences between Vertov and Eisenstein about *kino-eye* versus *kino-fist*. But despite their appeal to this opposition, the Lefists rejected the inspiring, hortatory art of the *proletkult* and its descendents. What was at stake was one's attitude to the world and to the cognition of the world, and here the opposition between emotion and intellect is not directly pertinent, as Brecht recognised.

The simplest form of this revolutionary application of the device is expressed in the notion of ' social demand ', the motivation of the device by its social utility. This notion served to remove ' art ' from its pedestal and to demote the artist from priest to engineer. But it also had technical implications, expressed by Mayakovsky in *How are Verses Made?* (1926):

' Work begins long before one receives or is aware of a social demand. Preliminary work goes on incessantly. You can produce good poetic work to order only when you've a large stock of preliminaries behind you. . . .

' You mustn't make the manufacturing, the so-called technical process, an end in itself. But it *is* the process of manufacture that makes the poetic work fit for use. It's the difference just in those methods of production that marks the difference between poets, and only a knowledge, a mastery, an accumulation of the widest possible range of varied literary devices makes a man a professional writer.'[17]

However, the relation between the device and its social motivation is not the purely external one these lines might suggest, the poet being the verbal engineer supplying the most effective mechanism

for the political task set by society. This accusation was made against the notion at the time by Marxist critics. But Mayakovsky shows that the relation between device and social demand is more complex in the case of his own poem *To Sergey Esenin* (1925), written in reply to Esenin's suicide poem:

' After these lines Esenin's death became a literary fact. It was
at once clear how many insecure people these powerful lines,
just these very lines of poetry, would bring to the rope or the
revolver. And no amount of analysis in the newspapers, no amount
of articles, can wipe out these lines. One can and must combat
these verses only *with* verses. In this way society demanded that
Soviet poets should write a poem about Esenin.'[18]

Thus it is as it were a condensation of the literary series with the political series that constitutes the social demand: a literary-political action necessitates a literary-political reaction. It was in this sense, but in a much wider context, that Tretyakov argued that futurism was already revolutionary before it consciously linked itself to the proletarian revolution:

' Already in the first steps of futurism, in the mere character of
its work, it was clear that its efforts are directed not so much
at the creation of an artistic dogma replacing symbolism but
rather to setting the human psyche as a whole into commotion,
spurring on this psyche to the maximum possible degree of creative
elasticity, to a break with all canons and the belief in absolute
values.'[19]

The same movement from ' laying bare the device ' as an end in itself to the exploitation of the device in the service of a social demand occurred in the theory of the visual arts.

' Abstract art appeared. And at one and the same time, while
some . . . were highly delighted with such a novelty and . . .
tailored it in the style of metaphysics – others saw in the abstract
form a new, unprecedented possibility. Not the creation of forms
of the supremely " aesthetic ", but the expeditious construction
of materials. Not the " end in itself " but " value of content ".
Replace the word " content " by the word " purpose " and you
will understand what it's all about. But how can one speak of
" purpose " in an abstract construction? Between the construction
and the object there is a gulf: the same sort as between art and
production. But the constructivists are still artists. . . . The
crusaders of aestheticism are condemned to aestheticism until
a bridge towards production can be found ' (Arvatov in 1923).[20]

Hence the development from suprematism through constructivism and objectism to production art.

' The essence of the theory of production art lies in the fact that
the inventive energies of the artist do not serve decorative tasks

of all kinds but are to be introduced into all processes of
production. To make a useful and functional thing in a masterly
way – that is the definition of the artist who by that fact leaves
the caste of " creators " and is brought into a corresponding
productive community ' (Tretyakov).[21]

The final aim of production art was the dissolution of art into life,
breaking down the distinction between artistic work and produc-
tive labour, and giving the ordinary worker the distant and con-
trolled relation to the object of his labour characteristic of the
' laid bare device ', a new subjective relation to the labour process
described as ' productivist mastery '.[22]
   This programme was seen as utopian, even in the sphere of the
visual arts, and only to be anticipated in a ' laboratory ' form or
propagandised by the artist vis-à-vis the engineer. Literature was
even less advanced, but its future role was also clear:

' Poetic language is the laboratory of practical language. The
poet is not a mere organiser of words and propositions, but always
an inventor, a " former " of a real linguistic material (a fact
which the futurists were the first to realise). And the methods
of his creation are totally determined by the tasks set him
by society ' (Arvatov).[23]
   ' The poet's task is to make the living, concretely necessary
language of his time. This task may seem utopian, for it means:
art for all – not as a product for consumption, but as a productive
capacity ' (Tretyakov).[24]

In the mean time: The outlines of the theory of production are only
just beginning to appear in the verbal arts. Agitational art is only a
half solution to the question, for agit art works by the " aesthetic
interruption " of consciousness, ie, a means of the old art.
After it has torn the consciousness from the real situation and
led it through the side streets of fiction it confronts it with
some agitational statement. By that very fact it lends the latter
a greater effectivity. . . . . Every work, even an aesthetically
constructed one, must carry on its back into the consumer's
consciousness the maximum of contraband in the form of new
devices for the reworking of linguistic material, in the form of
agitational ferments, in the form of new militant sympathies and
joys, hostile to the old, drivelling taste which leads away from
life or creeps after it on its belly. One must struggle within art
and with its own means for its downfall, so that the verse whose
purpose might seem to be " lightly and softly to divert " has
its explosive effect in the guts of the user ' (Tretyakov).[25]

The Russian formalists were students of linguistics and poetics
who also offered their theoretical services to the futurist poets and
artists. The theorists of *Lef* were futurist artists attempting to
adapt their art to the cause of the revolution, and to make use

92 of formalist theory in justification of that adaptation. Their position is thus understandably less coherently worked out theoretically. However, it does not seem possible to argue that the weaknesses of that position arise from a Machist epistemology inherited from the formalists. If there is a reversal of the ' order of consciousness and being ' in the *Lef* positions, this lies in their utopian anticipation of the role of the aesthetic function in a communist society. Brecht, working for most of his life in capitalist societies (and less influenced by the visual arts), did not follow the Russian artists onto this terrain.[26] But his position represents, I believe, an alternative solution to the problem of deliberately politicising the aesthetic programme of the historical avant-gardes.

II

Stanley Mitchell suggests that in taking over the notion of *ostranenie* from the Russians and translating it as *Verfremdung*, Bertolt Brecht was deliberately punning on the term *Entfremdung* (which Brecht occasionally uses as a synonym for *Verfremdung*). one of the two terms in Marx's *1844 Manuscripts* usually translated as ' alienation ' (the other being *Entäusserung*, literally ' externalisation '). The implication being that the ' alienation ' in modern art in general is a response to the ' alienation ' or ' reification ' of capitalist society, and that just as for the young Marx, the most extreme phenomenon of alienation, the proletariat itself, is the instrument that will overcome it in revolution, the revolutionary art in the capitalist epoch is for Brecht the art that emphasises alienation.

Brecht's mentors in Marxism, particularly where philosophy was concerned, were Karl Korsch and Walter Benjamin. The first of these is one of the most important representatives of the historicist interpretation of Marx, the second was introduced to Marxism by reading Lukács's *History and Class-Consciousness*. Both are bound to have been aware of the publication in 1931 of Marx's *Manuscripts*. Paraphrasing Brecht in 1934, Benjamin reports him arguing that Kafka was terrified by ' the thought of men being alienated from themselves (*sich selbst entfremden*) by the forms of their life in society '.[27] Hence it seems likely that Brecht knew of the young Marx's use of the term.[28] However, passages in Brecht's own writings linking the two uses of the term seem rare. The following is one example:

' It is illuminating that the repulsion (*Befremden*) that we feel
at the behaviour of our fellow men and which also strikes us so
often in our own behaviour when we are producing art influences
that art. It is not the attitude of the treader but also that of
the trodden that repels (*befremdet*) us. The pregnant woman, at
the mercy of a social system inimical to life which yet rigidly
forces maternity on her, we see struggling not for the right of

her offspring to life, but for her own right to destroy it. The
working man we see fattening and perfecting the power machine
that holds him down. The intelligentsia we see selling their
knowledge *and* their conscience. Ourselves, the artists, we see
painting the rotting walls of ships that are already sinking.
What is more natural than that we should seek ways and means
of making such repulsion (*Befremden*) general and overwhelming? '
(XV, 359).

In an earlier passage, before Brecht had introduced the term
Verfremdung, a similar notion seems to be at work, and in a his-
toricist problematic:

' The situation is complicated by the fact that less than ever
does a simple " reproduction of reality " tell us anything about
reality. A photograph of the Krupps factory or of the AEG yields
practically nothing about those institutions. The genuine reality
has slipped into the functional. The reification of human relations,
the factory say, no longer gives out those relations. Hence it is
in fact " something to construct ", something " artificial ",
" posited ". Hence in fact art is necessary ' (XVIII, 161-2).

An earlier reference in the same essay to the naturalisation of
society (' Are there contracts in nature? Does nature need con-
tracts? The great economic interests operate with 'the force of
nature ') suggests the historicist problematic.

However, the very paucity of these examples suggests Brecht's
distance from that problematic, given his mentors and their pre-
dilections Heinz Brüggemann in his extremely useful book *Literary
Theory and Social Revolution*[29] attempts to prove that, in theory
if not in politics, Brecht was a Korschian, but for lack of con-
vincing citations from Brecht, the reconciliation is no more
than one of the non-contradiction, not one of the extensive
coincidence of their recorded views. And the quotations I have
given are none of them fully convincing as straight theoretical
statements. The first is rather an apologia using rhetorical para-
dox, the second, though it refers to the reification of human rela-
tions under capitalism as calling for ' artificality ' in representa-
tions, also appeals to the ' shift into the functional ', a charac-
teristic which will certainly be extended in the forces of production
with the transition to communist society,[30] and the third is
rhetoric again, and rhetoric playing on the ambiguous value of
the notion of nature. Like many artists and poets writing about
literary questions, Brecht did not feel the logician's obligation to
reduce the ambiguity of his terminology, but rather delighted in
it as one more A-effect. His theoretical writings, too, are objec-
tionable to those philosophers who are a ' bad audience for art '
since ' they so often lack the capacity for boredom ' (XIX, 411).

A more decisive counter-argument is provided by the conversation
with Benjamin already referred to (and to which I shall refer again),

where Brecht generally divided poets, irrespective of their historical situation, into ones like himself who are ' not completely in earnest ' (ie, maintain a distance to the object of their work — that is to say, use A-effects prominently) and *Substanz-Dichter*, visionary writers who are. Alienation-effects are, then, for Brecht, as they were for the formalists, autonomous technical devices of art, not avatars of the alienation of man under capitalism. ' Distanciation ' would probably be the best translation of *Verfremdung* if translation translated meanings in Husserl's sense rather than signs. ' Alienation ', though it lends itself to mystificatory interpretations, preserves an ambiguity which was almost certainly intended by Brecht.

But this autonomy of devices does not imply for Brecht, any more than it did for the Marxist formalists of *Lef*, that art is to be pursued for its own sake.

' As can be seen from the texts [of his poetry of the 1920's], it was not just a matter of " swimming against the stream " from the formal point of view, of a protest against the smoothness and harmony of conventional verse, but always even then of an attempt to reveal the proceedings between men as contradictory, shaken by struggle, violently active ' (' On unrhymed lyrics with irregular rhythms,' XIX, 397).

To what extent did Brecht follow the formalists in the politicisation of the device?

Brecht's constant references to knowledge in art, to didactic art, to ' showing ' reality, etc, would seem to indicate that he, at any rate, unlike Tretyakov, did attribute a cognitive role to art. But the claim that art is not essentially cognitive does not imply that art does not contain knowledge, convey it, teach it or have other gnoseological functions: to change man's attitude to the world, to transform the subject, also transforms ideology in its relation to knowledge and thus facilitates knowledge itself in the strict sense of science. But it might still be argued that Brecht claims art is cognitive in the sense of science – does he not constantly cite the example of scientific experiment as a model for the arts? For example:

' Events and people in everyday life, in our immediate environment, have something natural about them for us, because of their familiarity. Their alienation serves to make them conspicuous to us. The technique of being irritated at normally " self-evident ", never doubted events has been carefully cultivated by science, and there is no reason why art should not take over this so infinitely useful attitude. It is an attitude science obtained from the growth of human productive forces, and art could obtain it for just the same reason ' (XV, 347).

But the example proves my point. Scientific cognition is characterised by an ability to prove its statements. What interests Brecht

here, in contrast to the 'sociological experiment' he undertook in the Threepenny Lawsuit, designed to prove to the German intelligentsia the indifference of capital to 'spiritual values' (itself more in the nature of a laboratory demonstration than a research experiment), is the attitude to the world characteristic of science, the attitude which regards it as experimentally, and hence practically variable, an attitude to the world which is, inversely, an attitude to knowledge itself incompatible with notions of self-evidence or absolute knowledge. Thus Brecht's position is inscribed in the problem of cultural revolution, of the transformation of ideology, of the subject, just as were those of the Russian Marxist formalists. Brecht's aim was, however, more modest than the Russians': to produce a theatrical art that would conform to and thus reinforce the proletarian attitude to the world and in the class struggle, a practical attitude, neither fatalist nor utopian, defined by the poles of 'sovereignty vis-à-vis the real' and recognition of the real (*Einverständnis*).[31] The knowledge which is embodied in and conveyed by his plays he obtained from scientific texts and experts in the fields covered by those plays; the reminiscences of those who knew him are full of accounts of his interrogations of the knowledgeable.

In his work Brecht provides two main models of this cultural-revolutionary art. The first is the didactic play *stricto sensu*, the *Lehrstück*, where the fundamental locus of the transformation was the actor, not the spectator. The second was the 'epic didactic theatre', directed at a transformation of the audience. Taking the latter, as the model that preoccupied Brecht for longer, I shall now try to expound, mostly by quotation, how Brecht conceived this transformation of the subject.

In 'Notices on my Work' (1939), Brecht expresses his 'love of clarity':

'My love of clarity derives from my very unclear mode of thought. I became a bit doctrinaire because I so imperatively needed instruction. My thoughts are easily confused, and to admit this does not disturb me at all – what does is the confusion. When I have discovered something I sharply contradict it straightaway and to my grief everything is brought back into question, so I was pleased when something at least seemed to be to some degree guaranteed me, as I said to myself, for some modest maxims. Such statements as that the proof of the pudding is in the eating, or that life is the mode of existence of albumen, uncommonly reassure me, until I get into trouble once again. Moreover, I really only write out scenes that occur between people because otherwise I can only very obscurely imagine them' (XIX, 414).

To secure clarity, the flux of events must be interrupted by reflection:

' The flux of events, the sequence of replies, movements, reactions
has something unclear, impossible to follow about it where there
is no intervention of tests, insofar as a flux of moods and emotional
notations constantly accompanies the other flux. Insofar as flux
(the processual) itself represents an important fact of reality, it too
can be represented, but then it too must itself be alienated as a
whole, precisely as flux, ie, displayed in this its peculiarity as a flux,
as hard to pin down, traceless (though leaving traces behind) '
(XV, 365-6).

Benjamin takes up the point:

' Thus uncovering (making strange, or alienation – *Verfremdung*)
of conditions is brought about by processes being interrupted. Take
the crudest example: a family row. Suddenly a stranger comes into
the room. The wife is just about to pick up a bronze statuette
and throw it at the daughter, the father is opening the window to
call a policeman. At this moment the stranger appears at the door.
" Tableau ", as they used to say around 1900.'[32]

In the article printed elsewhere in this issue of *Screen*, Roland
Barthes links this notion of tableau to the neo-classical theory of
painting of Diderot and Lessing – the ' pregnant moment ':

' In order to tell a story, the painter only has an instant at his
disposal, the instant he is going to immobilise on the canvas, and
he must thus choose it well, assuring it in advance of the greatest
possible yield of meaning and pleasure. Necessarily total, this
instant will be artificial (unreal; this is not a realist art), a
hieroglyph[33] in which can be read at a single glance (at one grasp,
if we think in terms of theatre and cinema) the present, the past
and the future; that is, the historical meaning of the represented
action. This crucial instant, totally concrete and totally abstract, is
what Lessing subsequently calls (in the *Laocoon*) the pregnant
moment. Brecht's theatre, Eisenstein's cinema are series of pregnant
moments.'

And, he argues, each pregnant moment is a retreat from the text,
from the maximally poetic work, to representation.[34] Brecht himself
talked of a ' return from alienation ' to distinguish his own posi-
tion from that of the historical avant-gardes: ' Dadaism and sur-
realism used alienation-effects of the most extreme kind. Their
objects do not return from alienation ' (XV, 364). Their use of the
A-effect was primitive ' because the function of this art is paralysed
from the social point of view, so that here art too no longer
functions. As far as its effect is concerned, it ends in an amuse-
ment ' (XVI, 612). Like the Russians, Brecht appeals to a social
demand. Formal experiments which ' are undertaken without a
genuine social demand ' (XIX, 490) are condemned.

However the self-enclosure of each scene is not complete. The
scenes are linked in a montage. ' The scene, initially independent in

its meaning, is discovered to share another meaning by its con-
nection with other scenes' (XV, 360). Benjamin's expression,
'Tableau! ', is the expression of the anecdotist, narrating the
event, recording the ' quotable gesture (Gestus) '³⁵ in it. Benjamin's
'Storyteller' in his essay on Leskov is an anecdotist, and the
anecdote, rather than say the fairy-tale, predominates in the stories
of Leskov and the other main writer he discusses, Hebel. In rela-
tion to a story about Ancient Egypt cited by Herodotus, he says,

' Herodotus offers no explanations. His report is the driest. That is
why this story from Ancient Egypt is still capable after thousands
of years of arousing astonishment and thoughtfulness. It resembles
the seeds of grain which have lain for centuries in the chambers of
the pyramids shut up air-tight and have retained their germinative
power to this day.'

Like Herodotus's anecdote, the epic scene, the Gestus, acquires its
particular meaning in the context of the particular anecdotal utter-
ance, the epic play.³⁶ At the other extreme, Brecht compares the
epic scene to eyewitness accounts of a street accident, with their
emphasis on how what happened might have been otherwise (what
he elsewhere calls the ' not-but function ', XV, 347). ' The tableau
is offered to the spectator for his criticism, not for his adherence '
(Barthes).
    Hence ' the classical alienation effect generates a higher under-
standing ' (XV, 364). Verständnis, understanding, is linked to Ein-
verständnis, consent, acceptance, a rejection of idealist and utopian
contempt for reality:

' Everything that belongs to the process of acting, the fact that
people appear before others to show them something, that this
something is something studied, which does not really happen,
something that is repeated, that the feelings are the feelings of other
persons, that processes are shown which are censored, that therefore
they have already been pondered, indeed a verdict on them has
been delivered, all this should retain its natural position and be
openly displayed, so that a certain sobriety and earthliness is
present that encourages thought ' (XV, 366-7).

    Stanley Mitchell cites in his support Bernhard Reich's two dis-
tinctions between ostranenie and Verfremdung. The first, that
' " making aware " in Brecht is a logical necessity since habit and
familiarity hinder the recognition of phenomena ', is, in fact,
already implicit in Shklovsky's ' Art as a Device ', and is completely
explicit in later formalist or structuralist positions. Formalism was
never an aesthetics of shock alone. The second, that ' Brecht's
estrangement helps one to see better the content of things ', is more
pertinent, if the help is seen as a political education of one's
' vision ' rather than the provision of a more accurate picture of
reality.

III

In modern discussion of the relations between technical advance in the arts and the revolutionary class struggle, there is a striking recurrence of geological metaphor. In his pamphlet 'Constructivism' (1920), Gan calls what 'unites the ideological and the formal' or 'the characteristics of Communism' and the 'expedient use of industrial materials', the 'tectonic'.[37] Benjamin wrote in 1927 that 'just as the deeper rock strata only come to light where they outcrop, so the deeper formation "tendency" is only visible to the eye in the outcrop points of the history of art. . . . Technical revolutions are the outcrop points of the development of art where tendency always comes to the surface, is in some sense exposed.'[38] And in 1965, Franco Fortini refers to poetry as one of the 'bradyseisms', vibrations of the class struggle that are so slow they cannot be located precisely in it.[39] These uses seem quite independent of one another, but they all refer to one thing, or rather one conviction: that there is a *correspondence* between the socialist revolution and technical developments in the arts, but this correspondence is a *secret* one. For the constructivists, the correspondence lay in the identity between the futurist destruction of the privileged art object and the communist aim of the abolition of the social division between mental and manual labour; for Benjamin in a contemporaneous revolution of the strictly technical forces of production in both the arts and the economy; for Fortini, in poetry's formalism as a metaphor for the communist formalisation of life. But the conviction is stronger than the particular explanations offered by the various authors.

Brecht seems to have shared it. The point of the 'Small Contribution to the Theme of Realism' is that the censor's political objections to *Kuhle Wampe* are his aesthetic objections. But there was no absolute synchronisation of the two developments for Brecht. His first model for a revolutionary theatre, the *Lehrstück*, was adapted to the conditions of the class struggle in Germany in the early 1930's, yet it retained for him an exemplary value. The contradiction is particularly striking in the case of *Die Massnahme*. From 1933 to his death he always refused permission for it to be performed.[40] And yet, less than a week before Brecht's death in August 1956, Manfred Wekwerth 'asked Brecht, who did not like being confronted point-blank with such questions: "Brecht, name me a play which you regard as the form of the theatre of the future." The answer, too, came back point-blank: "*Die Massnahme*".'[41] And his later parabolic plays were not unreservedly adapted to their socio-political context:

' Only in a few places and not for long have the circumstances
been favourable to an epic didactic theatre. . . . As well as a
determinate technical standard, it presupposes a powerful
movement in social life which has an interest in the free discussion

of the problems of life with a view to their solution and can
defend that interest against all opposing tendencies ' (XV, 272).

In the 1930's Brecht wrote a number of plays like *Señora Carrar's
Rifles* (1937) which were a deliberate retreat from epic theatre to
a more naturalistic theatre, because only the latter had the support
of the revolutionary movement and could thus have any influence
on the immediate class struggle.[42]
    But Brecht seems also to have had a more fundamental doubt
along these lines. In a conversation with Benjamin in July 1934, he
remarked:

' I often imagine being interrogated by a tribunal. " Now tell us,
Mr Brecht, are you really in earnest? " I would have to admit that
no, I'm not completely in earnest. I think too much about artistic
problems, you know, about what is good for the theatre, to be
completely in earnest. But having said " no " to that important
question, I would add something still more important: namely,
that my attitude is *permissible*.'

His example of the other kind of writer, the writer who is com-
pletely in earnest, the visionary writer, is Gerhart Hauptmann. ' I
sometimes ask myself whether writers like Hauptmann aren't, after
all, the only ones who really get anywhere: I mean the substance
writers *(Substanz-Dichter)*.'[43] But is Brecht right here? Are the
Substanz-Dichter realist writers like Hauptmann, or are they not
rather writers like Khlebnikov, who was certainly completely in
earnest and a visionary, but who are writers of the text in Barthes'
sense? If so, Shklovsky's ' Art as a Device ' represents not just a
position since surpassed, of merely historical interest, but is still
actual, despite the fact that a politically responsible art may be
required to pursue a different line. Which is not to deny the
correspondence between artistic and political revolution, but to
claim that this correspondence is not just secret in depth, as the
geological metaphor suggests, but also asynchronic in time.

' When I noticed how the old verses suddenly paled when the
future hidden in them became a today, I realised that the
homeland of creation is the future. It is thence that blows the
wind sent by the gods of the word.'[44]

Notes
  1. The point is made rather differently in Julia Kristeva: ' The Ruin
     of a Poetics,' *20th Century Studies* no 7/8, December 1972, p 102.
  2. See Gareth Stedman Jones: ' The Marxism of the Early Lukács, an
     Evaluation,' *New Left Review* no 70, November-December 1971,
     pp 27-64.
  3. Cf Mikhail Bakhtin: ' It should be stressed that the very concept of
     a unique truth does not at all imply the necessity for one single,
     unique consciousness. It is perfectly possible to admit and think that
     a unique truth requires a plurality of consciousnesses, that on prin-

100   ciple it cannot be contained in the limits of a consciousness, that it is, so to speak, by nature *factual*, and is born from the point of contact of various consciousnesses. It all depends on how we represent truth to ourselves and its relation to consciousness. The monological form of conception of knowledge and truth is only one of the possible forms. This form arises only where consciousness is posed over being and the unity of being is transformed into a unity of consciousness.' *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, cit* according to the Italian translation *Dostoevskij, Poetica e stilistica,* Turin 1968, p 107.

4. 'What is poetry,' *cit* according to the French translation in Roman Jakobson: *Questions de poétique,* Paris 1973, p 122.

5. See Jacques Derrida: *La Voix et le phénomène,* Paris 1967.

6. English translation in Lee T Lemon and Marion J Rice, eds, *Russian Formalist Criticism, Four Essays,* Lincoln Nebraska 1965.

7. Cf Derrida, *op cit,* pp 110-11.

8. Roman Jakobson: *Main Trends in the Science of Language,* London 1973, p 13.

9. Cf *ibid,* esp p 24. As Stanley Mitchell notes, and Jakobson acknowledges (*ibid,* p 14), Gustav Shpet was an important intermediary between Husserl and the Moscow Linguistics Circle. It is noteworthy that, in his attack on the formalists, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1929), V N Voloshinov locates Shpet in the Humboldtian ' individualistic-subjectivist ' tradition of linguistics which he opposes to a Cartesian ' abstract-objectivist ' tradition, whereas he places the formalists firmly in the latter. This suggests both the lack of a direct filiation between Husserl and the formalists, and the exaggeration of the differences between himself and the formalists that characterises Voloshinov's valuable book. See *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language,* trans Ladislav Matejka and I R Titunik, New York and London 1973, p 49n5.

10. Ardengo Soffici: *Primi principi di una estetica futurista,* Florence 1920, pp 23-4 & 29-30.

11. See I R Titunik: 'The Formal Method and the Sociological Method (MM Baxtin, PN Medvedev, VN Vološinov)' in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language, op cit,* pp 184-5.

12. 'What is poetry? ', *op cit,* pp 123-4.

13. 'New Russian Poetry' in *Questions de poétique, op cit,* p 15.

14. I take this opportunity to acknowledge that, however critical I may be of Shklovsky's work as theory, his books have given me lasting pleasure as literature, particularly *A Sentimental Journey, Zoo,* and *Marco Polo.*

15. Sergei Tretyakov: 'Where from, where to? ', *Lef* no 1 1923, *cit* according to the German translation in *Ästhetik und Kommunikation* no 4, 1971, p 85.

16. It is to be found in Bukharin's *Historical Materialism* (art is ' a systematisation of feelings in forms' socialising private feelings), in Trotsky's *Literature and Revolution* (' It is one thing to understand something and express it logically and quite another thing to assimilate it organically, reconstructing the whole system of one's feelings and to find a new kind of artistic expression for this new entity '), and was often referred to by the Tolstoyan phrase ' emotional infection '. Curiously, the one place it is absent is in Bogdanov's writings, for he regarded proletarian art as an expression of the proletarian world-view at a sublime level.

17. English translation by G M Hyde, London 1970, pp 21 & 57.

18. *Ibid,* p 30.

19. Tretyakov, *op cit,* p 84.

20. *Lef* no 1, 1923, English translation, *Screen* v 12 no 4, Winter 1971-2, pp 39-40.
21. Tretyakov, *op cit*, p 86.
22. See Nikolai Tarabukin: 'From the Easel to the Machine' (1923) in *Le Dernier tableau*, trans Andrei B Nakov, Paris 1972. This did *not* imply an 'aestheticisation of life'–cf Arvatov's attack on Evreinov's slogan of the 'theatricalisation of life' in *Lef* vol 4, translated in *Screen* v 12 n 4, p 47.
23. 'Poetic Language and Practical Language,' *Pechat' i revolutsija*, 1923 no 7.
24. Tretyakov, *op cit*, p 87.
25. *Ibid*, pp 86-7.
26. For a moment of anticipation in his work, though, see p 98 below.
27. Walter Benjamin: *Understanding Brecht*, London 1973, p 108, *Versuche über Brecht*, Frankfurt 1966, p 120.
28. However, it should be noted that neither Korsch nor Benjamin were devotees of the promotion of the concept to a central position in Marxism. The same can be said of the Frankfurt School, and Lukács and all Communist philosophers. In the 1930s only Social Democrats showed much interest in it.
29. Heinz Brüggemann: *Literarische Technik und soziale Revolution. Versuche über das Verhältnis von Kunstproduktion, Marxismus und literarischer Tradition in den theoretischen Schriften Bertolt Brechts*, Reinek bei Hamburg 1973.
30. Cf Tarabukin on the 'dematerialisation' of modern production and its aesthetic consequences in 'From the easel to the machine', *op cit*.
31. 'A work which reveals no sovereignty vis-à-vis reality and provides the audience with no sovereignty vis-à-vis reality, is no work of art' (XIX, 411). For *Einverständnis* see the *Badener Lehrstück vom Einverständnis* (II, 587-612). He did not, of course, like the Russians, appeal to emotion as opposed to intellect in this function of art – hence the constant charge of intellectualism made against Brecht, despite his many denials, eg: Art 'must combat, uncover, remove from circulation old feelings and old ideas, and track down and promote new ideas and feelings' (XVI, 907) and 'The A-effect should not be treated as something cold, bizarre, wax-dummy-like. To alienate a figure does not mean to remove it from the sphere of human values. A process is not made unsympathetic by alienation' (XV, 369).
32. *Understanding Brecht, op cit*, pp 18-19.
33. If Brecht's scenes are hieroglyphs, they are so under the old and mistaken definition of hieroglyphs as a natural character. Bernhard Reich describes Brecht rehearsing his version of *Edward II* in Munich in 1923, instructing the actor playing the traitor Baldock: 'You must show the treacherous gesture, the *Gestus* of a traitor. The public should note the conduct of a traitor. It must notice – TREACHERY!' (*Im Wettlauf mit der Zeit*, Berlin 1970, p 257). As in allegory, Baldock is the personification of an abstract concept, a label, a letter. The scene is *graphic*, in both senses of the term.
34. This retreat involves a moment of fetishism. Cf Brecht: 'At those front-line productions during the war, put on by soldiers for soldiers, this effect of alienation occurred when soldiers played certain girls' parts. Every spectator remained aware of the comic side of this, and yet when the actors showed their underwear, erotic effects were produced. And more was learnt about women through these actors in that as men they knew more about women than women do. Woman appeared as a manipulable entity' (XV, 368).

35. *Understanding Brecht, op cit*, p 19; *Versuche über Brecht, op cit*, p 26.

36. Walter Benjamin: *Illuminations, Essays and Reflections*, trans Harry Zohn, London 1970, p 90. Benjamin himself describes the same hashish trip once as his own evocation of a town ('Hashish in Marseilles', *Über Haschisch*, Frankfurt 1972, pp 45-54), once as a friend's account of how he 'nearly made a million' ('Myslowitz-Braunschweig-Marseilles', *ibid*, pp 33-44). One of the most important things shared by Brecht and Benjamin was a common sympathy for those literary and sub-literary genres and devices despised by the worshippers of the classics. Another crucial example is allegory. This raises the whole issue of Brecht's relation to tradition, which now has quite a large bibliography attached to it. Suffice it to say that Brecht approached the works of the past with their use-value to him in mind, rejecting any teleological history of culture, or the vulgar-sociological Marxism which insists that the classics, the works of the rising bourgeoisie, should be the model for the rising proletariat. Adorno situates himself in the teleological version when he accuses Brecht of 'regression' in a letter to Benjamin for this use of the notion of use-value (*New Left Review* no 81, September-October 1973, p 58).

37. Aleksei Gan: 'Constructivism', *cit* Camilla Gray: *The Great Experiment, Russian Art 1863-1922*, London 1962, p 285.

38. *Die literarische Welt*, Jg 3 (1927) no 11, p 7.

39. *Screen* v 15 n 1, Spring 1974, p 64.

40. In an interview with Reiner Steinweg in 1970, Elisabeth Hauptmann stated 'Brecht informed Eisler in my presence that until further notice he would refuse permission for performance of *Die Massnahme* and had informed his publisher to that effect. Eisler agreed straight away and said more or less that he too would tell his publishers to respond to inquiries about a performance of the play in the same way as Brecht had told his. Of course, Brecht had no objections to the play. He just thought that misinterpretations in staging and in reviews of performances would be harmful to things' (*Die Massnahme*, critical edition with a guide by Reiner Steinweg, Frankfurt 1972, p 271).

41. *Die Massnahme*, critical edition, *op cit*, p 265. For a discussion of the *Lehrstück* as a model for the theatre of the future, see Reiner Steinweg: *Das Lehrstück. Brechts Theorie einer politisch-ästhetischen Erziehung*, Stuttgart 1972.

42. Cf Bertolt Brecht *Arbeitsjournal*, ed Werner Hecht, two volumes, Frankfurt 1973, I, 41.

43. *Understanding Brecht, op cit*, pp 106-7.

44. Velimir Khlebnikov. Cf Julia Kristeva: 'L'Ethique de la linguistique,' *Critique* no 322, March 1974 (special number on Roman Jakobson), an article which only came to my attention when the bulk of the above text was already written.

Stephen Heath

'A defect? I've never been able to endure anything
but contradiction.' (XIX, 414)

Lessons from Brecht. The following notes are no more than that:
a series of readings (the very etymology of the word *lesson*) across
the range of Brecht's writings on literature and art, politics and
society, in the interests of the discussion of one or two questions
which are of importance to us in our work today and which those
writings pose clearly and crucially. It is this purpose that gives
these notes their sole coherence; reading Brecht (making of Brecht
the 'subject' of this issue) is to appeal neither to a person nor,
a fortiori, to what Brecht called, in a note on 'reactionary writ-
ing', the 'trimmings' *(Beilage)* of personality (XVIII, 82) – did
Brecht himself, indeed, ever show the slightest regard for the
author, for artistic authority? throughout his work there runs a
kind of practical disrespect, a 'fundamental laxity in matters of
intellectual property' (XVIII, 100), the constant plagiaristic appro-
priation of previous works as material to be recast, rethought in
new articulations: simply, it is to recall certain ideas, certain
formulations, the example of a truly dialectical practice, a cease-
less process of theoretical production in the conjuncture of specific
problems, specific situations.
   The determining questions here are thus Brecht's own, raised at
every moment of that practice: what is the use of this and for
whom? will it aid in restructuration? *Was nützt der Umgrup-
pierung?* (XVIII, 112); which means for us the opening out of
Brecht's formulations into fresh problems, into a new situation –
*those of film, that of our reflection on cinema and on the whole
nature of the relations of artistic practices and ideology, of the
particular interventions of such practices in – and on – ideology.*
The method adopted in ·these notes is, however timidly, that
'mobilisation of quotations' regarded by Brecht as basic to dialec-
tical argument, being listed as one of the objectives of his proposed
'Society of Dialecticians' (XX, 147).

Distance and separation
In *Loin du Viêt-nam*, an entire section of the film is occupied by
– as though held in the hollow of the spoken discourse which
accompanies it – the split eye of Godard, face half-hidden by the
enormous mass of the Mitchell camera which fills the screen. The
split eye: one eye towards us, its gaze refracted by a pair of glasses
and already partially concealed; one eye glued to the sight, on the
other side of us who are glued to the screen through the sight of

the invisible camera eye of the film, our point of view. Centre frame, the lens of the Mitchell, dominating, blind spot of the image, gulf of the representation, sightless and with nothing to see – ' taking ' us, and losing ' us ': the distance of negation.

Godard, it is often said, here addresses himself directly to the spectator, ' fiction is jettisoned in favour of direct-speech '. This ideology of the direct dies hard – though Godard has tried to demonstrate precisely that no speech, no image, is ' direct '; witness, for instance, *Lettre à Jane*. There is no question in this section of *Loin du Viêt-nam* of a nod and a wink between subjects in speech (as one talks of ' comrades in arms '), nothing of that ' directness ' that made the name of a Richardson (*Tom Jones*). Indeed, what have we, *subjects*, to say about Vietnam? what positions of consequence does ideology give us as subjects to take? But this camera – American Mitchell –, this film – American Eastman Colour – have a great deal to say, something to tell us about Vietnam, about the reality of the struggle and about the reality of our struggle in ideology against the representations it produces and the positions of the subject they hold (representation is exactly a fixing of positions). Godard's section is not in Vietnam but far from Vietnam, which is to pose the problem differently, specifically. What Godard pulls out of true – *distances*, in Brecht's sense of the term, this giving the extent of the ' far from ' – is the ' directness ' of representation; not direct speech but distance in speech (distance should be introduced everywhere, says Brecht, even into words themselves). Vietnam is not a crisis of consciousness – a problem of direct speech (a reduction into which, in a different area of concern, a film like *State of Siege* can fall) – but a crisis of the subject, of the ideology through which we live – a problem of representation; the section interpellates-disinterpellates us and Godard, refuses the position of the camera/I, negates: imposition of ideology, deposition through interrogation; in short, *distanciation*.

*   *   *

Distance, negation, deposition. Looking at Chinese painting (XVIII, 278-279), Brecht notes the lack of monocular perspective, the absence of a fixed point of focus, its dependence on juxtaposition: ' several things are juxtaposed together, dispersed over the paper as the inhabitants of a town are dotted around in that town, not independently of one another but neither in a dependence of a kind that would threaten their very existence '. Such painting thus provides an image of an order without constraint: ' Chinese composition lacks the element of constraint which is so familiar to us; its order costs no violence '. Placing things side by side, with no attempt at totality, at uniformity (' the artist does not deny the basic surface by covering it over completely '; think in this respect of the poverty of objects and expressions in *Tout va bien* which allows image and sequence of images to produce a certain

space of reading, a certain movement of argument and contradiction — the recurrent scenes in Godard's films of covering over and effacing are perhaps a symptomatic counterpoint in this connection — and then think — the particular example matters little — of *Mourir d'aimer*, with its décors of abundance, the image constantly covered by the expression of Annie Girardot, the stifling definitions of all-informing essence; or equally of *Last Tango in Paris*, where the bare apartment is entirely congealed in the expression of the absence it suggests, the discovery of the world ' outside ' inside: for Brando hotel, wife, the past; for Schneider childhood, paternal house, the General father), Chinese painting leaves room, the eye can wander, dispersed: ' the things represented play the role of elements which could exist separately and independently, yet they form a whole through the relations they sustain among themselves on the paper without, however, this whole being indivisible '. Not an organic unity — *a* meaning — but a series of meanings and re-meanings (a tabularity), a multi-perspective without the fixity of depth. Instead of representations, displacement — of eye, of subject (in both senses of the term), a materiality of texture which baffles the ' innocence ' of reflection:

' in the gaps between objects, the grain of paper or linen is
brought out with its own particular value. . . . The mirror in
which something is here reflected stays in the forefront as mirror
and this implies amongst other things a laudable renunciation
of the complete subordination of the spectator, whose illusion
is never complete '.

Negation, distance, is precisely that: the demonstration of relations, of structures; the overturning movement, as in the Godard section, between representation and production, image and material, subject and language, a *critical* dialectics.

*   *   *

Everyone knows about Brecht and distanciation but it is not always apparent that this knowledge is very Brechtian (that is, held within a political theory concerning the necessity of a specific intervention on representation and ideology). The two habitual weaknesses in this respect — ways of smoothing over the terms of this specific intervention — are the reduction of distanciation to a technique (leaving the illusion of representation intact: witness the symptomatic appearance and conservation of the image of the illusionist in the following declaration by Resnais concerning *Stavisky:* ' Just as with Brecht you knew you were at the theatre, so I want you never to forget in my work that you are at the cinema. What I show on the screen is filmed images which announce themselves as such. This is my anti-illusionist side; a conjurer does not hide his skill, and neither do I ';[1] the confusion here is indicative: the illusion is identified as such, but distanciation is taken as the

simple demonstration of the illusion and Resnais can claim to be both anti-illusionist *and* conjurer, *and* illusionist) and the equation of distance and separation.

Separation is the mode of the classic – ' Aristotelian ' – theatre which Brecht seeks to oppose, as it is also of classic cinema; the very mode of representation. The structure of representation is a structure of fetishism: the subject is produced in a position of separation from which he is confirmed in an imaginary coherence (the representation is the guarantee of his self-coherence) the condition of which is the ignorance of the structure of his production, of his setting in position. To understand the mechanism of this, we need to refer back to the account given by Freud, notably in the 1927 paper entitled ' Fetishism '.[2]

The paper opens with what Freud describes as a ' most extraordinary case ': a young man who spent his early years in England before being taken to Germany where he forgot his mother-tongue almost entirely, erects as the condition of his sexual fulfilment the appearance of ' a shine on the nose '. This ' shine ' is revealed in analysis as a displacement from the English ' *glance* at the nose ' to the German ' *Glanz* – gleam, brilliance, shine – auf der Nase ', a displacement that holds – and checks – the moment of the discovery by the patient as child of the lack of a penis in women; glancing upwards, a saving substitute is found on the face, and the glance produces the shine, the renewal of which is then the basis of future sexual activity. The fetish, that is, disavows the fearful knowledge of the lack; Freud writes: ' the subject's interest comes to a halt as it were halfway; it is as though the last impression before the uncanny and traumatic one is retained as a fetish '.

It is this procedure of disavowal (*Verleugnung*) that is of particular importance. Comments Freud:

' In the conflict between the weight of the unwelcome perception
and the force of his counter-wish a compromise has been reached,
as is only possible under the dominance of the unconscious
laws of thought – the primary processes. Yes, in his mind the
woman *has* got a penis, in spite of everything; but this penis
is no longer the same as it was before. Something else has
taken its place, has been appointed its substitute and now inherits
the interest which was previously directed to its predecessor.
But this interest suffers an extraordinary increase as well, because
the horror of castration has set up a memorial to itself in the
creation of this substitute '.

Knowledge is disavowed in horror of what it entails (the woman lacks a penis, she is castrated, therefore I too may be castrated); the fetish assures the subject's position, his identity. All this is to say that fetishism is a structure – popular accounts of fetishism with reference simply to objects are thus extremely misleading – and that this structure focusses a centre, the subject it represents,

which derives its unity, its untroubled centrality, from the split it operates between knowledge and belief, between knowledge which disperses the stability of the subject, opens a production of desire in which the subject has everything to lose, and belief in which the subject positions himself in his structural plenitude. Freud notes the *happiness* of fetishism: people are usually ' quite satisfied with it '; they even ' praise the way in which it eases their erotic life '. The fetish is a token of triumph over the threat of castration and a protection against it; moreover, it avoids homosexuality in that it does endow women with the characteristic that makes them possible sexual objects.

If we look closely at Freud's exemplary case, we can see that it is truly most extraordinary, providing as it does in the play on *glance/Glanz* a little résumé of the fetishistic effect. The fetish is indeed a brilliance, something lit up, heightened, depicted, as under an arc light, a point of (theatrical) representation; hence the glance: the subject is installed (as at the theatre or at the movies) *for* the representation (which is why, perhaps, the representation in turn of fetishism – in Strick's *Ulysses* or in sexploit films such as *La Punition* – has a flatness that creates unease); identity in separation, the very geometry of representation.

Think in this respect of the *photograph*, which seems to sustain exactly this fetishistic structure. The photograph places the subject in a relation of specularity – the glance –, holding him pleasurably in the safety of disavowal; at once a knowledge – this exists – and a perspective of reassurance – but I am outside this existence (the curious tense of the photo: the anterior present), the duality rising to the fetishistic category par excellence, that of the beautiful. This is the success of the photo in the *Sunday Times Magazine* or *Paris Match*, the constant glance at the world which can sublime anything into the security of beauty. We need to consider carefully the complex of determinations evident in the contemporaneity of the development of the photograph, the definitive establishment of the ideology of subject, representation and exchange, and the eventual emergence of fetishism as a theoretical concept in Marx (analysis of the fetishism of commodities) and then in Freud (theory of the construction of the subject); what is in question in Marx and Freud being the function of representation: not the alienation of essence, but the essential denial of work, production, the refusal to grasp the positions of subject and object within that process. As far as film is concerned, one of the crucial factors in the form of its development was exactly this ideology and its exploitation of the photographic image in this way. The resistance to the coming of sound, for example, was then readily expressed in the name of sublimity, an expression of which the following declaration by Chaplin is indicative: ' it's beauty that counts most in the cinema. The screen is pictorial. Images. Lovely young girls, beautiful young men in self-sufficient scenes '.[5] It seems, moreover, that

such a feeling retains its dominance today, both in realisation and reception: consider the style of the films of Claude Chabrol and the kind of acclaim they receive. Thus one of the key battles in the cinema has been — and is — precisely that against fetishism (Godard's *Le Gai Savoir* poses the problem concisely) and this is a battle brought very much to the forefront in Brecht's own work, as is made clear by Walter Benjamin in his essays on Brecht where he does, indeed, refer to the specific example of the photograph. Describing the technical development of the photograph, Benjamin comments on the absorption of that development into the establishment of a flawless perfection, of ' aura ' (*die Aura*):

' let us follow the subsequent development of photography. What do we see? It has become more and more subtle, more and more modern, and the result is that it is now incapable of photographing a tenement or a rubbish-heap without transfiguring it. Not to mention a river dam or an electric cable factory: in front of these, photography can now only say: " How beautiful ". *The World is beautiful. . . .*'⁴

The problem is, therefore, according to a constant Brechtian emphasis, not to continue to supply the production apparatus of photography as it is, but to change it; without a radical restructuration, the attempt to join photograph – or film – and revolutionary commitment is a contradiction in terms, and this transformation is what Brecht refers to as ' literarisation ' (*Literarisierung*): here, the breaking down of the barrier between image and writing, depiction and meaning: ' Literarising entails punctuating " representation " with " formulation " ';⁵ it being this that could give to photography its ' revolutionary use value '⁶ and, following Brecht, Benjamin talks of montage in this connection as a form of such punctuation, as ' the agitational use of photography '.⁷ There is no need to stress the importance of montage for this purpose in early Russian cinema, where it goes along with the use of slogans, notions of intellectual film and so on, nor its new importance today, providing as it does, for instance, the specific texture of the explorations of political cinema in Godard whose own reference to Brecht is, moreover, quite explicit.

Let us come then to this reference, to Brecht's own practice in its theoretical formulations. Fetishism describes, as we have seen, a structure of representation and exchange and the ceaseless confirmation of the subject in that perspective, a perspective which is that of the spectator in a theatre – or a movie-theatre – in an art of representation. It is this fixed position of separation-representation-speculation (the specularity of reflection and its system of exchange) that Brecht's distanciation seeks to undermine. Thus there is no call for surprise if, contrary to received ideas, Benjamin opens a discussion of epic theatre (the Brechtian theatre of distanciation) by describing a certain *refusal of separation* which it

entails:

' The point at issue in the theatre today . . . concerns the
filling-in of the orchestra pit. The abyss which separates the
actors from the audience like the dead from the living, the abyss
whose silence heightens the sublime in drama, whose resonance
heightens the intoxication of opera, this abyss which, of all the
elements of the stage, most indelibly bears the traces of its
sacral origins, has lost its function. The stage is still elevated,
but it no longer rises from an immeasurable depth; it has
become a public platform. Upon this platform the theatre now
has to install itself '.[8]

In Brecht's own words, it is a question of ' creating a new contact
between the stage and the auditorium and thus giving a new basis
to artistic pleasure' (XV, 301), of abandoning the 'fourth wall,
that fictitious wall that separates stage and audience' (XV, 341).
   It is this breaking down of separation on which the establish-
ment of distance depends, the repositioning − depositioning − of
the spectator in a critical − multi − perspective, and it is identi-
fication (*Einfühlung;* ' the identification of the spectator with the
characters imitated by the actors' XV, 240) which therefore
bears the brunt of Brecht's attack. The reasons for this lie in turn
in the *effect* of such identification, that of *catharsis,* the spiritual
absolution of the spectator as this can be seen most notably in
tragedy which gleans from a consideration of human suffering a
harvest of essence − this is ' how it is ', the Reality of Man's
Condition.[9] One of Brecht's favourite examples of this curve of
tragedy is *King Lear,* which moves from a specific socio-political
situation − the division of the kingdom − to the stripping away of
the social and political until Lear is left naked on the heath, a
universal representative of mankind, the poor, naked ' forked
animal ', dying ' *abgestreift und aufgeopfert* ' as Hegel would put
it. In tragedy, that is, suffering is essentialised and so, as it were,
redeemed, the spectator absolved in the laying bare of an absolute
pattern of meaning: separation, identification, the pity-and-fear
of catharsis. It must be emphasised, however, that though tragedy
is, in this way, a major point of attack (' humanity must not be
smeared with tragedy' XVIII, 10), identification, depending on
separation in the face of the scenic representation, and the cath-
arsis it sustains are of general definition for Brecht: it is the whole
context of cathartic drama that he is concerned to reject.
   Such a rejection, it may be worth noting, is one of the crucial
factors of difference between Brecht and Lukács, marking the
' debate ' between the two men in the thirties and continuing into
Lukács' subsequent estimates and misappreciations of Brecht's
work, as well as into his later attempts to found a general aesthetic
theory.[10] For both men, catharsis is a wide-embracing aesthetic
category, but from totally different patterns of understanding; in

Lukács, that is, catharsis is a validly transforming crisis of sub-
jectivity: the receiver of the art-work (spectator, reader) feels

' a sorrow, and even a sort of shame, at never having perceived
in reality, in his own life, something which is given so " naturally "
in the work. It is not necessary to go into the detail of how an
initial fetishising consideration, its destruction by an unfetishised
image in the work of art, and the autocriticism of subjectivity
are contained in this setting up of contrast and this perturbation.
Rilke gives a poetic description of an ancient Apollo. The poem
culminates – exactly in line with our discussion – with an appeal
by the statue to the person contemplating it: " You must change
your life ".'[11]

Subject and representation are assumed and the objective image
(given as non-fetishising on this assumption) re-presents the sub-
ject to himself in a totality absent – alienated – in the initial
point of departure, thus suggesting that transformation of sub-
jectivity (and not of the subject, which would be to pose the
problem of representation, to pose it as problem) defined by the
Rilke poem – ' You must change your life.' In the context of this
urge to totality, the idea of essence quickly reappears – ' Catharsis
addresses itself to the essence of man '[12] – and it is to be noted
that Lukács' revaluations of Brecht's work depend precisely on its
recasting into such terms of catharsis, the discovery of ' a complex
dialectic of good and evil. Problems of society have become prob-
lems of humanity, subsuming the inner conflicts and contradictions
of the warring parties '.[13] In no sense, however, do Brecht's theory
and theatre hinge on subjectivity and humanity; it is a question
rather of introducing distance into subject and representation and
so of producing not a totality, but a series of social, political and
ideological interruptions; the motto of such a theatre is not ' You
must change your life ' but, to adapt as does Brecht the eleventh
of the *Theses on Feuerbach,* ' the point is to change the world '.
    The gap between Brecht and Lukács can be seen again – in direct
consequence of their respective handling of catharsis – in their
attitudes to the idea of the hero. For Lukács, the biographical
form of the novel, the process of the conflict between hero and
world, is a guarantee of totality; the reader is given consciousness
through that movement. For Brecht, on the contrary, it is this
mediation through the hero, the pattern of individuation–essen-
tialisation–consciousness, that must be displaced; as the charac-
ter Jesse puts it in *Mann ist Mann:* ' Man is indeed at the centre
of things, but relatively '. Significantly, that work of Brecht that
probably comes nearest to the Lukácsian conception of the ex-
perience of the novel, the very early *Trommeln in der Nacht,* is
later criticised heavily from the standpoint of distanciation: ' I did
not manage to make the spectator see the revolution with different
eyes from my *hero* Kragler, and he saw it as something romantic.

The strategy of distanciation was not yet at my disposal '. Such a
strategy of distanciation, moreover, demands the examination of the
effect of the hero in all its material extensions. In the French film
Septembre chilien the voice of the woman militant in the final
interview is spoken over by Simone Signoret; where the woman's
voice is flat, anonymous almost, *political* (that of a specific
struggle), Signoret's brings with it emphatic emotion and indi-
vidual pain, a heroisation, a certain non-political ' human mes-
sage ', the feeling of those Signoret roles of today, the resolutely
determined yet deeply – and fraily – affected Woman (eg *Les
Granges brûlées*). It is these effects that Brecht's theory seeks to
locate *and to refuse*.

Distanciation, then, is the work of this location and refusal, a
work against separation-and-identification. As such, it stands dia-
lectically away from the notion of a simple opposition: it is not
a question of positing separation against identification (we have
seen the real inter-dependence of these two poles in the fetishistic
structure) and it is thus erroneous to suppose that identification
is somehow excluded in a mechanical gesture: ' a way of acting
which does not aim at the identification of the spectator with the
actor (this way of acting is what we call " epic ") has no interest
in *totally* excluding identification ' (XV, 387). Brecht's particular
reference here is to the mode of acting as quotation which he pro-
posed and by which he had been impressed in Chinese theatre (once
again, and like Eisenstein continually, Brecht turns to Oriental art
for examples of an alternative economy of the sign, of meaning
and representation); the Chinese actor represents but represents
also the process of representation:

' The Chinese show not only the behaviour of men, but also the
behaviour of actors. In this way, they show how actors present
the actions of men; for the actors translate the language of
everyday life into their own language. So when one watches a
Chinese actor, one sees no less than three characters at once,
one who shows and two who are shown ' (XV, 428).

Or, as Marina Vlady puts it at the beginning of *Deux ou trois
choses que je sais d'elle*: ' Yes, speak like truth quotations. That's
what old Brecht said. Actors must quote.'

What is important, the exact context of this presentation-as-
quotation, is the ceaseless *displacement* of identification (' man is
indeed at the centre of things, but relatively '), the introduction
precisely of a constant distance, a critical movement that produces
not a totality but a play of contradictions, an idea of transfor-
mation (' the custom that one must think afresh in every new
situation ', *Der Neinsager*). The aim is no longer to fix the spec-
tator apart as receiver of a representation but to pull the audience
into an activity of reading; far from separating the spectator, this
is a step towards his inclusion in a process: ' the spectator must

be included, his attitude modified ';

‹ ' it is also as spectator that the individual loses his epicentral
role and disappears; he is no longer a private person " present "
at a spectacle organised by theatre people, appreciating a work
which he has shown to him; he is no longer a simple consumer,
he must also produce. Without active participation on his part,
the work would be incomplete (and if it were complete, then
it would *today* be imperfect). Included in the theatrical event,
the spectator is " theatralised "; thus less goes on " within him "
and more " with him " ' (XV, 222).

It is significant in this respect that it is to the principle of montage
that Brecht continually refers to suggest the realisation of this
active inclusion (a reference which, again, distinguishes him
sharply from Lukács for whom montage is a potential destruction
of essential forms), for the practice of montage in cinema (the
practice of a Godard, or, differently, of the early Resnais – *Muriel*)
offers exactly a way of cutting the spectator into and beyond the
film in a (multi-) position of reading; moreover, it is as this that
the combat against montage is waged in the history of cinema,
the refusal of montage going hand in hand with the fetishisation
of Reality and its observer, the cult of the sequence-shot, of, in
short, that ideology of the ' direct '.

We should remember, then, as Barthes reminds us, Brecht's
admiration for Eisenstein (he talks of ' the enormous impression
that the first films of Eisenstein made on me ' XX, 46), but in
doing so we should also grasp, as Barthes again reminds us, the
difference between the two bodies of work on the common ground
of montage: in Brecht, the question is not that of the production
of adherence (the synthesis of two montage elements into a realised
and directed concept); rather, it is that of the production of con-
tradictions already mentioned, a dialectical procedure by which
the spectator is placed in that *critical* position on which Brecht
lays so much importance and which means not simply that the
spectator criticises but also that his own position is given as
critical, contradictory, that he is pulled out of his fixity. Which is
to say that distanciation for Brecht is not a ' form ' but a mode
of analysis, the very mode of understanding of dialectical material-
ism. Little wonder that ' Marx was the only spectator I could
imagine for my plays ' (XV, 129).

In this perspective, it is possible to correct two more misunder-
standings (or reductions): that distanciation is a form and that
to define distanciation is to define a series of techniques, the
presence or absence of which marks a play or a film as ' Brechtian '
or ' non-Brechtian ', as ' distanciating ' or ' non-distanciating '. The
first, although clearly in the long run the two are directly linked,
leads to the characteristic saving irony of contemporary bourgeois
cinema, from *La Nuit américaine* to *O Lucky Man*, from *Stavisky*

to Jodorovsky's *La Montagne sacrée* (an irony which is generally a transposition of the novelistic devices dear to a Gide — *Les Faux-monnayeurs* — or a Huxley — *Point Counter Point;* there is a work to be done one day on the history of the cinema in its appropriations and reappropriations of the novelistic, such a history being not, as it were, a literary history of cinema but, precisely, a history of the forms of the ideological institution of representation). Each of these films clearly demands individual analysis, yet in every case such an analysis would show how a representation (a set of coherent and totally assumed positions) is confirmed (and *not* infirmed) by a reference to the illusion of its presentation, an effect that need cause no surprise if we think back to the previous description of fetishism and to the knowledge/belief split on which that was shown to depend. Indeed, as has been so often pointed out from at least Dr Johnson on, no one (except the mythical spectator of Rymer's *Othello*) has ever taken the illusion *as* reality; the point is always the illusion *of* reality, and we saw the foundation of identification and catharsis in separation: ' the spectator never loses consciousness of the fact that he is at the theatre. He remains conscious of the fact that the illusion from which he derives his pleasure is an illusion. The ideology of tragedy lives on this deliberate contradiction ' (XV, 386-387). What is important in Aristotelian theatre is the reality of the illusion and it is this reality that is the real target for distanciation; which is then to say that the notion of distanciation as simply a set of techniques is an ideological refusal of the actual force of the analysis — of the *intervention* — it effects on ideology, is to reduce it to a mere decorativism according to a common process of inoculation bitterly described by Brecht himself: ' Capitalism has the power to turn into a drug, immediately and continually, the poison that is thrown in its face and then to enjoy it ' (XX, 37). Distanciation is the recognition of the need for a ceaseless work of displacement and this even — constantly — within the forms of its own production.

The reality of the illusion: it is this that is the very area of that work in its critical ambition; its object, that is, can be seen as *ideology,* or, more accurately, the relations of men to reality and to themselves in ideology, in so far as ' in ideology is represented not the system of real relations that govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of these individuals to the real relations under which they live '.[14] There is room here for only the most sketchy account of ideology and the following points are given simply in the context of the immediate argument with regard to Brecht's theory of distanciation. Briefly, then, to expand that definition in this direction, ideology plays an effectively *active* role in a given mode of production (which is to recognise ideology as being indispensable to any society); it functions as ' a set of practical norms which govern the attitude and the practical stance

adopted by men with regard to the real objects and the real problems of their social and individual existence, and of their history'. To grasp this is to acknowledge the material existence of ideology; it is not a question of a kind of cloud of ideas hanging over the economic basis but of a specific social reality – a set of *representations* – defined in a series of specific institutions (ideological state apparatuses). To analyse a particular ideology is to analyse this existence within the dynamic – the process – of a mode of production. It was said, however, that what is represented is the *imaginary* relation between men and the real conditions of their existence. ' Imaginary ' here refers to an effect of recognition-miscognition (*reconnaissance-méconnaissance*): recognition because ideology is anchored in reality, embraces the conditions of existence, furnishes a practical guide for intervention on reality (is not a pure realm of the imagination); miscognition because it seizes reality in order to represent it according to its own purposes: ' In ideology the real relation is inevitably invested in the imaginary relation, a relation that *expresses a will* (conservative, conformist, reformist or revolutionary), a hope or a nostalgia rather than describing a reality'; ' Ideology, then, is the expression of the relation between men and their " world ", that is, the (overdetermined) unity of the real relation and the imaginary relation between them and their real conditions of existence '.

It is the process of the establishment of *subjects* within – *by* – this representation that is crucial; ideology takes up individuals and *places* them as subjects, puts them in positions of subjectivity, *subjects them*. We need a very fine understanding here: the distinction between individual and subject is (methodologically) real, but individuals always are subjects; there is no simple state of anteriority of some pure individuality; even before birth, the individual has already been placed as subject, enveloped in a discourse that names him in his subjection. What is required is a way of thinking that is subtle enough – dialectical enough – to grasp that the individual is always the subject of ideology but that he is always more than simply that figure of representation (just as the social cannot be reduced to the ideological which nevertheless is the very form of its representation as society). Similarly, we must also realise that this process of ideology is not to be described as the interiorisation of norms (of ' roles ') by the subject (this is the description given in popular existential analyses – from which it is not completely certain that Althusser himself manages to escape – which very quickly refined such notions as alienation and constantly suppose a preceding and underlying, authentically reassertable subjective project); the subject only has his existence because he is positioned in a set of structures which determine experience for the subject *whom they include*.

It is this structural positioning of the individual as subject, his defining inclusion in ideological formations, that Althusser des-

cribes as the mechanism of *interpellation;* through a range of ideo-
logical state apparatuses – family, school, church, press, art, etc –
the individual is ceaselessly called upon as subject, solicited, inter-
pellated by these institutions in the interests of the reproduction
of the social formation, of the agents of production. The subject
is thus the fundamental category of ideology:

' the category of the subject is constitutive of all ideology, but
immediately, at the same time, we must add that the category
of the subject is constitutive only in so far as all ideology has as
its function (this function defining it as ideology) the
" constitution " of concrete individuals as subjects. It is in this
play of a dual constitution that the functioning of all ideology
is to be found '.

In fact, the problem is more difficult: such an account would
have to be supplemented by a consideration of the whole question
of the construction of the individual as subject-support for ideo-
logical formations in the symbolic, the question, that is, of the
subject in language (where language is at once constitutive and not
reducible to the ideological) and which gives the necessity for the
articulation within historical materialism of psychoanalytic theory
(as science of the construction of the subject).
. Something of this difficulty will make itself felt, indeed, as we
look in the context of this discussion of ideology at the Brechtian
theory and practice of critical intervention. To work on the reality
of the illusion is effectively to work on the ideology of representa-
tion and the subject-positions it determines. This is the very point
of the attacks on identification, separation, catharsis, passivity,
and distanciation is the dialectical realisation of such attacks;
thinking within and without, in and beyond the play – or the film
– is the mode of critical displacement: the play represents – is
held within ideology – but that representation, that series of re-
ceived formations, – is itself represented (so that we have, as it
were and to adapt a Brechtian expression, *complexes* of represen-
tation – *Vorstellungscomplexe*) and this grounds the work not in
' Truth ' but in an objective concrete political knowledge (defined
in the precise context of a theory – distanciation – and its object
– ideology). Barthes put it well in an early essay:

' Distanciation is this: going all the way in the representation,
to the point where the meaning is no longer the truth of the
actor but the political relation of the situation. In other words,
distanciation is not a form, it is the link between a form and a
content. In order to distance, a support is required – meaning '.[15]

Brecht's is a theatre of representation but of representation *for
meaning* (and so a theatre of pleasure, ' pleasure comes from giving
meaning to things' XIX, 551; the admiration for Diderot, mentioned
by Barthes in the article in the present issue of *Screen*, stems from

this commitment to an art of instruction and pleasure, of trans-
formation); representations are shown and distanced, seized in the
complex of reality and attitude they produce. This is that decenter-
ing to which reference was made in discussing the loss of the
organising status of the hero in epic theatre: it is not that the
spectator is held separate to the action of the play and, from there,
effectively placed in a relation of identification to the hero as
totalising consciousness, but rather that the spectator is himself
included in the movement from ideology to real, from illusion to
objective truth (the political analysis of forms of representation
in their determinations, the activity of the play); there are no
heroes in such a theatre, not even the spectator (as judge, as uni-
fying consciousness): as subject, the spectator is taken up in the
representation – the play creates an effect of recognition – but
that representation, that position taken up are pulled out of true
(of ' Reality ') and distanciation is exactly this (critical) operation.

' The play itself *is* the spectator's consciousness – for the
essential reason that the spectator has no other consciousness
than the content that unites him to the play in advance, and
the development of this content is the play itself: the new
result which the play *produces* from the self-recognition whose
image and presence it is. Brecht was right: if the theatre's sole
object were to be even a " dialectical " commentary on this
eternal self-recognition and non-recognition – then the spectator
would already know the tune, it is his own. If, on the contrary,
the theatre's object is to destroy this intangible image, to set in
motion the immobile, the eternal sphere of the illusory conscious-
ness's mythical world, then the play is really the development, the
production of a new consciousness in the spectator – incomplete,
like any other consciousness, but moved by this incompletion
itself, this distance achieved, this inexhaustible work of criticism
in action; the play is really the production of a new spectator,
an actor who starts where the performance ends, who only starts
so as to complete it, but in life '.[16]

Film theatre
Let us consider an apparent paradox. One of the decisive defi-
nitions of film in its classic ideology, the ideology dependent on
the production and exploitation of the effect of the ' impression
of reality ', was made *against* theatre, in terms of the power of
film for the illimitation of the visible constraints of the stage (of
the *scene*, giving that word the two senses – stage and tableau –
that it so often takes in the Barthes' piece here); where the stage
has ' wings ', fixed limits, the screen, as it were, knows only the
implied continuation of the reality of the image:

' The screen is not a frame like that of a picture (*tableau*), but
a mask (*cache*) which allows us to see only a part of the event.

When a person leaves the field of the camera, we recognise that
he is out of the field of vision, but he continues to exist
identical to himself in another part of the scene which is
hidden from us. The screen has no wings . . .' (Bazin);[17]

such an illimitation moving out of the shot (the exit and re-entry
of characters, objects continuing off the frame),[18] into the shot
(deep focus), over the shot (sequence-shot). Thus one way of
restating the limitations of cinema (of posing its specificity as
signifying practice) has been precisely the *theatralisation* of film
(in Straub, for example; the ' theme ' itself comes to the surface
in *Othon* or *The Bridegroom, the Comedienne and the Pimp*, but
the activity is a factor of all the films). In other words, one mode
of distanciation in film has often, and centrally, been the exact
reference to theatre.

The paradox that might be seen here is to be understood along
what could be called the bond of representation. Aristotelian
theatre and classic cinema are held together in this bond accord-
ing to a series of shared aims (the effect of ' Reality ') and devices
(note the importance of the *scene* in classic American cinema, for
which sequence-shot and deep focus provide the very possibility)
but, as in Bazin, the development of film and the specification of
its artistic independence are made by asserting the differences of
the one from the other. Hence Barthes is right to hold film and
theatre (as well as literature) together in a general discussion of
representation, at the same time that the theatralisation of film
can be seen as a certain way of demonstrating the particularity
of film, its forms, of opening a distance within its flow of
representation.

Such notions as framing and *découpage* on which Bathes insists
are indeed significant in this respect. Effectively, the screen does
reproduce the conditions of Italian fourth-wall theatre, which is
to say that it disposes – that it lays out – the coherence of a
subject-spectator whom it holds in position. It is in the very terms
of this reproduction that cinema ' technology ' is developed: from
the perfecting of the camera itself as instrument to the elaboration
and codification of the rules of film making and construction (the
30° rule is an easy example), it is this coherence of the subject-
eye in its relation to the image that is crucial. Concerning the
camera, for instance, recent work has stressed the ideological
determinations operative in its history.[19] Thus we can note that the
photograph knows a development contemporaneous with the grow-
ing awareness in painting of the dependence of the scientific
perspective defining its form on a specific cultural structure estab-
lished in the Renaissance (Hegel's *Lectures on Aesthetics* provide
an account of this awareness), that the photograph itself poses
questions about the reliability of the eye, produces a certain scien-
tific doubt, and that this doubt is accompanied – compensated –

by a massive bolstering of the eye and its perspective in the realm of ideology – the ideological exploitation of the camera to reproduce, to confirm, the vision of the eye. As has already been suggested, it is this exploitation that guides the subsequent modifications of the camera which is ' perfected ' towards such a reproduction, the placing of the subject in a fixed relation to a stable ' Reality '. The camera is invisible, a window objectively framing reality, the means of the representation to the subject of his position, and this is the very *moral* of the frame; the German for the French *cadrage*, the centring and adjustment of the image, is precisely *Einstellung* which also means attitude, moral standpoint. Everything in the mainstream (commercial) development of camera, movie camera, editing and continuity techniques and so on is then fashioned to this position – lenses, camera height, strategies for linking shots (the manuals are entirely based on the reference to the confirmation of the subject, to the maintenance of continuity; failure to observe the rule of 30° will lead to ' too brutal a modification of the spectator's vision . . . a disagreeable effect ').[20] It is indicative, moreover, that the character perspective (ie the subjective shot) is classically possible but only within certain very restricted limits, those exactly of an identification with a figure who himself occupies at that point a position analagous to that of a (and hence of the) spectator; films like *The Lady of the Lake*, shot in the first-person, are rare, regarded as ' aberrations ', and aberration is indeed the intended signification of the use of the marked first-person elsewhere – blindness, in the scene in the apartment between girl and killer in *Wait until Dark;* short-sightedness, in the comically clumsy bathing scene in *Ssssnake*. What is fundamental is separation, the fetishistic position of representation: the power of the camera is that it traces the dividing line in such a way as to hold the spectator as it were with the wings behind him and not to his side, whence that effect of illimitation to which Bazin refers.

The apparent paradox again is that the destruction of the effect in its ideological complicity can pass through the theatralisation of the camera: representational fixity, the continuity of separation, the third-person on which classic cinema turns, is broken down by the dislocation of illimitation, a demonstration of the limits imposed on the camera that can be made in the name of an extreme subjectivism. This is the characteristic of a certain form of American underground cinema (of which a film like *Flaming Creatures* would be typically representative) where exploration against the pattern of camera continuity goes along with – as though the one were the term of the other – a non-aligned sexuality, the irruptive reference to an energy not accessible in the geometry of the self-representation of the subject in the fetishistic structure. The problem is that produced in this way such an energy actually re-enters – re-confirms finally – the positions of the old

alignments; hyperidentification blocks analysis in the myths of spontaneity, authenticity, free-wheeling subjectivity. In a note on the force and the weakness of ' destructive and anarchist lyricism ', Brecht provides us with an effective summary of this:

' All the productivity of men is not contained in the actual production, which is always limited. Those elements that are not directly absorbed into it, however, do not simply fall outside, they contradict; they are not simply lacking in meaning, they disturb. Thus only a very attentive scheme (*ein sehr weit gespannter Plan*) will be able to grasp their activity, and you need an ear which is extremely sensitive to what is productive. It is a real achievement to keep these elements from destruction, that is, from destroying *and* from being destroyed ' (XIX, 408).

What constitutes that achievement is the posing of the problem of representation politically, of the political problem of representation, and it is exactly this that the idea of distanciation invokes. It is not sufficient to wield the lyric force of an immediate freedom (which is not to deny its possible local efficacy but to recognise the weakness of the only reference it can produce, that of an anarchic subjectivity, the very destruction of its own potential destructive force); the need is for a work in and on representation, for, that is, the introduction of distance, a work within *representation* that *produces* an understanding of its formations and of the construction of the subject in the positions assigned by those formations. It is this understanding that would characterise a Brechtian film theatre: theatralisation is not just *An Actor's Revenge* with its visible – theatrical – organisation of the frame *as limited and limiting space*, but also, more crucially, *Dear Summer Sister* with its *critical heterogeneity* (Oshima's films are attacked as hybrid, bastard forms, as lacking in the artistic purity of the true Japanese cinema), its exploration of the contradictions and ideological positions of contemporary Japanese society, including those of cinematic practice in that situation; is not just *Othon* but also *Nicht Versöhnt* (*Not Reconciled*);[21] is a film like *British Sounds* with its discordance of language *from within language* (' the struggle of an image against a sound and of a sound against an image '), its refusal of *figuration* (note the uncentered, non-vocal framing in the Ford workers' discussion sequence, the absence of deep focus, the use of repetition and discontinuity).

Representation, language, theory: the problems crystallise in these terms. As Barthes shows in his article here, film and theatre are ' in ' representation; the task is to displace that representation politically, not to reproduce its coherence but to demonstrate the contradictions that coherence avoids, the liaisons it assumes and guarantees. Such a demonstration – distanciation – is a work that is *theoretical*, the constant production of a reflexive knowledge

that transforms particular representations, displaces them *in their forms* (for Brecht the production of theory is one of the main demands made by the proletariat on intellectuals and to assent to advice of the 'no theory, just get on with writing plays' variety is to fall into the trap of what, following Lenin, he calls 'rampant empiricism' (XV, 276), and the objective focus of that transformation, of that displacement, the area of work, is then language: 'the theory of knowledge must above all be criticism of language' (XX, 140); 'the critical examination of language is of major importance when it considers the latter as an instrument of harm' (XIX, 432). What is in question in these last quotations, the first a note on reading Kant, the second a comment on the force of the satire of Karl Kraus, is, finally, a general emphasis on the need for a ceaseless attention to language, to languages in their specific productions, to their reality as *specific signifying practices*.[22] The harm is precisely their instrumentalisation, their homogenisation as direct reflection/expression, immediate − and so unquestionable − 'Truth'. Against this, distanciation as heterogeneity: film theatre, the film text as hybrid, impure, process of contradictions; the 'end of cinema' in Godard's phrase, the end, that is, of that established language which is given as *the* language of cinema, as the realisation of the essential genius of film form, fixing the position of director and spectator, the conditions of reading (or not reading), ideologically determined (in the interests of the 'impression of Reality') and itself determining, by a movement in return, the history of cinema, the forms of its development, its 'progress', its *exploitation*. The destruction that marks the practice of a Godard, an Oshima, a Straub (as, in theatre, that of a Brecht) is to be understood here, against the language of this exploitation: 'Unfortunately, cinema is a language, but I try to destroy that language, to make films that do not take any account of that language'.[23] Not to take account of that language, however, is a *critical* enterprise, exactly a destruction, a *depropriation* ('Language is a form of colonisation. No?'[24]): what falls, what is destroyed, is the unity of film founded in the acquired orders of representation and the subject of their expression. This is the sense of Straub's idea of the practice of film as *negativity at work,* 'la mort au travail': 'At every moment a film must destroy what it was saying the moment before; we are stifling in stereotypes and it is important to help people to destroy them. In this respect, I hope the last shot will signify nothing. This for a start.'[25] No longer the illusion of the continuum of plenitude ('Reality speaks') but the discontinuity of the series of articulations that cross the cinetext in which the 'fullness' (the *property*, the imaginary projections of the subject as punctual source of meanings) equally of director and spectator is implicated. The films of such a textual practice are themselves a constant process of reading, this process then itself demanding new modes of reading, displacing the spec-

tator from the positions in which he is interpellated in the classic film. This again is often the very ' argument ' of Godard's films – at a high level of theory in *Le Gai Savoir* or in *Lettre à Jane*: how is the audience to be deployed in a reading other than that of the unfolding of image sequences in the direction of its own know-ledge? Classic film is finally less a question of mise-en-scène than of mise-en-*place*, and anything that disturbs that place, that position, the fictions of myself and my ' Reality ' can only be theoretical, the theatralisation of representation in its forms; film theatre, critical cinema, a cinema of crisis and contradiction.

Narrative/montage

What better way to avoid contradiction than narrative? It is not by chance that the ' impression of Reality ' depends so closely on the development of cinema as ' unique narrative art form ',[26] that it is, indeed, in the terms of narrative that the very language of classic cinema is defined and worked out (' it is in one and the same movement that cinema made itself narrative and that it gained some of the attributes of a language ').[27] Narrative joins and aligns, smooths reading into the forward flow of its progress, and there need be no surprise if narrative can be seen as more ' realistic ' than, say, documentary (which is anyway very often a narrative genre), for narrative is, as it were, the transformation of representation into ' Reality ', the demonstration of its truth, the discovery of its meaning. Against the passionate interest in the *dénouement* (the revelation). Brecht opposes an interest in the choices and determinations of the action; against the rush of each scene into the next, a concentration on each scene for itself; against the straight evolution of a linear progression, an uneven movement of jump cuts, a complex montage of moments that proceeds ' by fits and starts, in a manner comparable to the images on a film strip '[28]: ' The relationship of epic theatre to its story, he says, is like that of a ballet teacher to his pupil; his first task is to loosen her joints as far as they will go '.[29]

The effect of narrative is exactly that of a tightening, action is moulded in a *destiny*, an inevitable coherence of the real. Whence its dual impulse of suspense and motivation, the very crux of its logic (and it is just such a logic that differentiates narrative from pure chronicle). When in *Sssnake* we are informed early on that only the mongoose can stand up to the king cobra, this guarantees at once the eventuality of a battle in the film between the two, and its sense; when, at the fair, a scene is devoted to the prowess of one of the policemen at rifle-shooting, this creates an expec-tation of the use of this prowess later in the film (narrative is a mode which strives to leave no waste) and gives a retrospective credibility to the final scene in which he saves the girl by killing the cobra with one shot; when the sick boa is installed in the cellar with the warning that it will curl up in the rafters, we know

that it will later appear from above, and when it does appear, crushing the over-inquisitive faculty member, it is, therefore, with a natural inevitability that replaces our sudden shock in a sphere of rational explanation; when we are told ' in passing ' that death from a mamba's bite resembles death from heart attack, then the use later on of the mamba as the weapon for the perfect crime is assured and the crime itself when it comes is justified in return. What is important in all this is the two-way – ' unbeatable ' – oscillation: if we realise the initial motivation, suspense is created (we wait for the boa to appear); if we do not, then the final event has a full shock effect and at the same time sends us back to the motivation, makes us see the link (we remember the boa's installation in the cellar); either way, the narrative produces a totality, offers an impregnable coherence. This may be unimportant in *Ssssnake*, but it is less so in a film like *State of Siege* where the force of narrative actually changes an apparent political message: suspense – whether or not to kill the American agent (and what we need to look at is how and why the fact of having announced the agent's death from the beginning of the film does not deter the subsequent creation of narrative suspense) – gives a *dramatisation* of the action (the drama played out between Bideau and Montand, the expression of the predicament of consciousness) – which is in fact the corollary of the real feeling of the film, manifested in the mediating figure of the old journalist, the view of reason.

For Brecht, it is the interrogation of reason and its forms that is crucial. Narrative must be interrupted; the focus is to be not on action and character in their irresistible momentum but on the ' intellectual decisions ' of every action:

' the pattern of the action is complicated by actions *that might have been:* destiny is no longer a monolithic power; rather one is given to observe fields of force across which run contradictory currents; the power-groups themselves are not only taken up in movements which oppose them but are subject to internal contradictions, etc ' (XV, 197).

One seeks ' the contradiction within what forms a unity ' (XV, 361) and for this Brecht has a name borrowed precisely from cinema, *montage,* to be understood as a principle of distanciation, the production of contradiction at every moment of the work, from the individual gesture of the actor to the overall organisation of the scenes. Montage is the *dialectical* form of the work.

Tradition and domination
' A work that does not dominate reality and that does not allow the public to dominate it is not a work of art ' (XIX, 411). It is this emphasis that provides Brecht's criterion of value: the work is a work in so far as it produces a specific knowledge, a certain

domination of reality. This moreover is a question of form as well as of content: 'the domination of reality. Everything could be measured against that demand, including the formal aspect, for no artist can dominate reality if his work errs in its form' (XIX, 413). Distanciation is the form in Brecht of the domination of reality; opposed as such to any crude notion of realism,- to the idea of 'reflection'.

Practically, the problem then posed is that of artistic heritage, of tradition. There is no domination of reality without an interrogation of reality in its forms, including those of its representation in art, and this interrogation is itself a formal process, a production, not a reflection. Thus Brecht stands against the Lukácsian vision of modernism as *decadence* – the breaking up of traditional forms seen as barbarism – in the interests of an avant-garde activity of the exploration of reality in the production of new forms of its definition. For Brecht, the role of the artist, as of the intellectual, is the overthrow of the weight of the heritage; to the question 'What does the proletariat expect of its intellectuals?', the first point of the answer is that they 'disintegrate bourgeois ideology' (XX, 54). The relation to tradition has to be one of destruction and, eventually, reconstruction, of depropriation and reappropriation where possible; 'In every age we have to try to tear tradition away from the conformism which seeks to appropriate it', writes Benjamin.[30] Brecht gives the complexity of his position in a fine passage entitled 'The proletariat was not born in a white waistcoat':

'Culture naturally reflects the conflict that has arisen between the productive forces and the mode of production. . . . There is no doubt that today a good number of those who are the bearers of culture are linking themselves ever more closely with the proletariat, the most powerful of the productive forces. The manifestations of the proletariat in the domain of culture, its apprenticeship, its intellectual productivity do not go on on some ground exterior to bourgeois culture and totally distinct from it. Certain elements of culture are common to both classes. Certainly, we must maintain that some habitual elements of culture have played out their role and are become elements of unculture (*Unkultur*). But there are other elements that remain which are in difficulty and which we need to defend. Our position with regard to culture has for basis the same process of expropriation which is to be carried on in the material domain. To take over culture means to transform it decisively. It is not only the owner who changes but the property too. And this is a very complicated process. So, which part of culture are we defending? The answer must be: those of its elements which the actual relations of production must suppress in order to carry on as they are' (XX, 89-90).

We come back here to our discussion of ideology; ideology is
not to be replaced by some area of pure knowledge; rather, from
within ideology, art, as realism in Brecht's sense, attempts to dis-
place the formations of ideology by posing the specific relations
of those formations in the mode of production (this is again the
basis of Brecht's notion of the social *gestus*). But such a produc-
tion encounters immediately the ideological definition of represen-
tation; it is not simply that what is represented is ideological but
that the terms of representation itself are equally so. This is where
we need to recall Althusser's account of the dominant ideology in
a given conjuncture as providing *the ideological threshold common
to all classes;* the massive representation of ' the world ' of the
social formation in which individuals find themselves, the very
realm of the ' natural '. This is Brecht's point concerning culture:
there is no immediate productivity ' on some ground exterior to
bourgeois culture and totally distinct from it ', ' certain elements
of culture are common to both classes '. From then on, the
struggle is, as it were, on the very ground of representation – on
the very ground of the interpellations of the subject in reality by
ideology; art as *displacement* in so far as it holds representation
at a distance – the distance, precisely, of politics.

Cinema
There are discussions elsewhere in this issue of Brecht's own inter-
ventions in the field of cinema – the ' sociological experience ' of
the *Threepenny Opera* lawsuit, the making with Dudow of *Kuhle
Wampe*. It may be worth adding to these a brief indication of one
or two emphases scattered through the writings and concerning
Brecht's conception of cinema.

   Brecht values cinema as providing a close focus on exterior
action, as being a non-introspective and potentially non-identific-
tional art:

' The fact is that the cinema demands exterior action and not
introspective psychology. Thus it is that capitalism, by provoking,
organising and automatising certain needs on the scale of the
masses, acts in a manner that is quite simply revolutionary. By
concentrating solely on " exterior " action, by reducing everything
to processes, by no longer recognising in the hero a mediator nor
in man the universal measure, it demolishes the introspective
psychology of the bourgeois novel; it devastates wide expanses of
ideology. This exterior point of view is adequate for the cinema
and makes of it something of importance. Cinema can well admit
of the principles of a non-Aristotelian dramaturgy (one, that is,
not based on a phenomenon of identification, of *mimesis*).'
(XVIII, 170-171).

Coupled with this is the definition of cinema as an art of relative

immobility; it is 'by nature static and must be treated as a succession of tableaux' (XV, 283).

The difficulty of this is apparent: it is easy to say that Brecht (as Benjamin too in 'The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction', an essay heavily influenced by Brechtian theses) was totally mistaken as to the actual development of cinema under the hegemony of Hollywood (and Brecht's own misadventures in Hollywood, the difficulties encountered by his various projects, bear witness to the fact of this mistaken estimation), that cinema became precisely the mode of the reconfirmation of the structures of the novel, of the novelistic, this bringing with it the whole paraphenalia of mimesis, identification, introspective psychology, hero as consciousness and so on. Again, it is easy to view with surprise the idea of cinema as fundamentally static when more or less the whole weight of thinking about film has identified its specificity as lying precisely in its movement (' What has the film maker to correspond to the colour and visual design of the painter, the solid masses of the sculptor, the musical sounds of the composer, and the word sounds and stresses of the writer and poet?. Undoubtedly the answer to this question is, *movement* ')[31] but we can begin to see here that Brecht is really grasping at a new conception of film or, better, at a *possibility* suggested by film against the straight terms of representation (those of the 'novelistic' of bourgeois novel and theatre) into which it was being firmly cast. The focus of this possibility seems to be the capacity of film to hold back the narrative, not to exhaust the images in the momentum of revelation, and this is the meaning of Brecht's emphases on the static nature of film and its potential for non-introspection, the presence of the image against the consciousness of developing presence. Such a possibility, moreover, might be seen as Brecht's own immediate experience of cinema at the time of *Kuhle Wampe*: the silent and early post-silent comedies in which the gag functions exactly as a constant narrative interruption; the films of Eisenstein which, as Barthes has shown, produce a certain effect of obtuseness, a friction of image and diegesis in the production of a 'third sense'.[32] The problem is not then a simple one of misunderstanding (of Brecht being 'right' or 'wrong'); rather it is one of the context of political intervention (see in this respect the discussion in the Editorial of Brecht's difficulties in Hollywood, the comparison of Brecht with Sirk and Fuller). Brecht's own oft-repeated principle of conduct needs to be remembered: the question can never be one of merely producing *for* a medium (theatre, radio, cinema or whatever); it is always fully one of *changing* that medium. It is the process of this transformation (which takes up dialectically medium and work), and this process alone, that is truly revolutionary.

There is a short text written by Brecht in connection with a
projected magazine to be called *Kritische Blätter* (XVIII, 85-86)
which deserves to be copied out in full at this point, providing
as it does a sharp indication of the emphases and options that
should be those of a review such as *Screen* today. It will perhaps
suffice, however, and this will form the only ' conclusion ' to this
piece, simply to bring forward some passages from this text in
conjunction with one or two brief annotations.

The magazine, says Brecht, must be critical in the widest sense
of the term: there is not an established criticism that can be
immediately and validly applied; criticism is to be created: ' the
first task is to render criticism *possible* '. It is exactly the produc-
tion of this possibility that is important for *Screen*: film criticism
abounds, *critical* theory of film is rare; it is the development of
the latter as the displacement of the former that is needed; indeed
there is a case to be made for the constant *explication* of this dis-
placement through analyses of the ideological structures of existing
' criticism ', from the pages of the weekly papers to the new
aesthetic radical-conservatism of this or that review. Evidently, the
elaboration of critical theory – the rendering possible of criticism
– means the posing of film as specific object, specific signifying
practice, and the grasping from within that perspective of the
problems of intervention in ideology, of a political cinema.

It is such an intervention on the part of critical theory itself on
which Brecht lays the key stress (*Kritische Blätter* is to teach an
eingreifendes Denken): ' criticism is here understood in its double
sense, the *dialectical* transformation of the totality of subjects
into a *permanent crisis*, and hence the conception of the age as a
" critical period " in both meanings of the term '. It is here that
theory is crucial: ' This makes necessary the rehabilitation of
theory in its productive rights'. We come back to a previous point:
there can be no question for Brecht – for us – of recommending
and selecting ('Critics' Choice'), of moving, that is, in the circuit
of a criticism of a cinema whose products it exists to sell; nor
even of establishing a critical pantheon of alternative films. The
struggle, the real work, is the attempt at a ceaseless transforma-
tion; ' today there is a new way of learning, a critical way, in
which one transforms what one learns, a revolutionary way of
learning. The new exists but it is only born out of the struggle
with the old, not without it, in a void ':

' The theory, or rather, in the beginning, the theories are not
extracted from " finished " works; they are developed at the
points where works " bring together " cinema and life, taking
life in the economico-sociological sense of the term. Such a
criticism transforms finished works into unfinished works, it
proceeds analytically '.

It is the production of this analysis that has occupied variously
the films of a Straub or a Godard; it is this analysis that should
occupy *Screen* now over the whole area of cinema. Such are the
critical lessons of Brecht.

Notes

1. Alain Resnais, Interview: *Le Nouvel Observateur* No 496, 13-19.
   May, 1974, p 74.
2. S. Freud, 'Fetishism', *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*, Vol XXI, pp 152-157.
3. Charles Chaplin, Interview: *cit* Marcel Lapierre, *Anthologie du cinéma*, Paris 1946, p 228.
4. Walter Benjamin, *Understanding Brecht*, London 1973, pp 94-95;
   cf Benjamin's 'Short History of Photography', *Screen*, v 13 n 1,
   Spring 1972.
5. *Understanding Brecht*, p 7.
6. *Understanding Brecht*, p 95.
7. Walter Benjamin, *Schriften* I, Frankfurt 1955, p 411 ('Montage als agitatorische Verwertung der Photographie').
8. *Understanding Brecht*, p 1.
9. Cf the very Brechtian definition of tragedy given by Barthes:
   'Tragedy is simply a way of gathering up human suffering, of
   subsuming it and thus of justifying it under the form of a necessity:
   the refusal of this recuperation and the search for the technical
   means for not succumbing to it treacherously is today an important
   undertaking'; R Barthes, *Essais Critiques*, Paris 1964, p 102.
10. A very helpful account of something of this debate, together with
    translations of some key texts by Brecht, is given in *New Left
    Review*, March-April 1974, pp 39-53.
11. G Lukács, *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen*, Berlin 1963, p 818.
12. *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen*, p 868.
13. G Lukács, *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism*, London 1962,
    p 88.
14. This and the following quotations are taken from two essays by
    Louis Althusser: 'Marxism and Humanism', in *For Marx*, London 1969; 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', in *Lenin
    and Philosophy*, London 1971.
15. Roland Barthes, 'Sept photo-modèles de *Mère Courage*', *Théâtre
    populaire*, No 35 (1959), p 18.
16. Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, pp 150-151.
17. André Bazin, 'Théâtre et cinéma', *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?* Vol II,
    Paris 1959, p 100.
18. Sirk seems to have tried to use this as a means of producing distanciation: 'A fragment running out of shot puts the observer into
    the picture in a way. The moment you have the whole table and
    drawer there you just become a voyeur.' *Sirk on Sirk* (Interviews
    with Jon Halliday), London 1971, p 79. Cf Paul Willemen, 'Distanciation and Douglas Sirk', *Douglas Sirk*, eds L Mulvey and J
    Halliday, Edinburgh 1972, pp 23-29.
19. The discussion can be found in: Marcelin Pleynet, 'Le point
    aveugle', *Cinéthique* no 6, 1970; Jean-Louis Baudry, 'Cinéma:
    effets idéologiques produits par l'appareil de base', *Cinéthique* no
    7-8, 1970; J-L Comolli. 'Technique et idéologie: caméra, perspective, profondeur de champ', *Cahiers du Cinéma*, nos 229, 230,
    231, 233, 234-235, 1970-1972. Cf Christopher Williams, 'Ideas about
    film technology and the history of the cinema', BFI/SEFT seminar
    paper, April 1973.

128   **20.** *Apprendre le cinéma*, special number of *Image et son*, Paris, May 1966, p 152. In fact, there is a great need for a detailed analysis of the way in which this kind of rule was established in cinema and permissibly transgressed. In an essay on Walsh's *Pursued* to be published in this year's Edinburgh Film Festival book, Paul Willemen examines an extremely interesting example of the use or misuse of the 30° rule leading to *discontinuity*.

21. As for Godard, so too for Straub the reference to Brecht is extremely important: *Not Reconciled* has a quotation from Brecht attached to the script similar to that with which Marina Vlady begins *Deux ou trois choses*, *History Lesson* is based on Brecht's ' novel ' *The Business Deals of Mr Julius Caesar*, his interviews make continual use of Brechtian formulations and insights.

22. Each word in this term is important: ' signifying ' is the recognition of a language as a systematic articulation of meanings; ' practice ' refers to the process of this articulation, to the *work* of the production of meanings, and in so doing it brings into the argument the problem of the relations of the subject within that work; ' specific ' gives the necessity for the analysis of a particular signifying practice in its specific formations (which is not a commitment to some ' purity '; in film, for instance, what is important is to analyse the particular heterogeneity of languages it subsumes – its combination of codes – and the particular forms by which it achieves this subsumption – its coherence).

23. Jean-Marie Straub, Entretien, *Cahiers du Cinéma*, no 223, August-September 1970, p 51.

24. *Ibid*, p 50.

25. *Ibid*, pp 53-54, 49.

26. J H Lawson, *Film: The Creative Process*, second edition, New York 1967, p XV.

27. Christian Metz, *Essais sur la signification au cinéma* I, Paris 1968, p 99. (For discussion, see ' The Work of Christian Metz ', *Screen* v 14, no 3, Autumn 1973, pp 22-24).

28. Benjamin, *op cit*, p 21.

29. *Ibid*, p 16.

30. Benjamin, *Schriften* I, p 497.

31. E Lindgren, *The Art of the Film*, second edition, London, 1963, p 92.

32. Roland Barthes, ' Le troisième sens ', *Cahiers du Cinéma*, July 1970, pp 12-19.

Charles Barr

Robert Hamer

The space given here to Hamer and to Mackendrick is not meant
to be in proportion to their merits, though I would say Macken-
drick's is a richer body of work, as it is certainly a more consistent
one. There is not room to discuss more than one of them at all
fully; and it is Mackendrick whose relation to Ealing seems the
more complex, and covers a more testing period (as director:
1948-55).

Hamer, after his episode in *Dead of Night*, made his first three
full-length films at Ealing – *Pink String and Sealing Wax*, *It Always
Rains on Sunday* and *Kind Hearts and Coronets* – but only one
more after that. It was not that, following his enormous success
of *Kind Hearts*, he was translated elsewhere, as Mackendrick would
be after his fifth film, *The Ladykillers*. He continued to keep in
touch with Ealing, returning for *His Excellency* in 1951 and mak-
ing *The Scapegoat* for Balcon in 1958 as an MGM film just at the
point when the Ealing identity lapsed. His films in the meantime
usually had some Ealing associations (eg Alec Guinness as star).

The relationship was evidently, if this is not putting it too
dramatically, a love-hate one. Hamer spoke warmly of the family
spirit at Ealing, but it is no secret that he had a long struggle to
realise his conception of *Kind Hearts;* had other projects come to
nothing; was regarded by Balcon as ' self-destructive '; came to
suffer from recurrent alcoholism.

The tension between attachment to, and violence against, the
family is the dynamic of his own main films: a characteristic
movement in them is the *stripping down* of a family structure.

The extreme unevenness of his work after *Kind Hearts* is prob-
ably explicable in health terms. *His Excellency, To Paris with Love,*
and *School for Scoundrels* can I think be written off. But *The
Spider and the Fly, The Long Memory, Father Brown* and *The
Scapegoat* are a considerable quartet, all four centred on lonely,
unattached individuals.

Lindsay Anderson spoke to an interviewer about his time as a
critic in the years after the war:

' The British cinema of that particular time . . . was completely
middle-class bound. Ealing Studio comedies – for example,

While the general justice of this can be recognised, *Kind Hearts*
seems the Ealing Comedy above all which one cannot describe as
' emotionally frozen '. A patronising *Times* criticism called Hamer's
next film *The Spider and the Fly* (set in France) ' an unmistakably
British film . . . in what passes for its emotions '[2]: again, the
implication is misplaced. The crucial distinction in this area is
between films which are victims of emotional atrophy and films
which diagnose it, take it as a subject – as Hamer's do.

In many ways they function, like *Nowhere to Go*, as a critique
of Ealing orthodoxy. The *Dead of Night* episode discussed above
is central to Hamer's work. The young couple are indeed emotion-
ally frozen, their relationship superficial: by implication (reading
Hamer's work as a whole) ' Ealing togetherness ' is superficial
because it is something taken for granted, and based on the re-
pression of so much – of conflict, selfishness, sexuality. Hamer's
starting-point, like Holt's, is the individual alone. It is only on the
basis of recognising people's potential for selfishness and coldness,
and the forces that make for this, that one can start to build
anything.

The first two Ealing features are ' community ' subjects which
Hamer breaks down in a distinctive way. The apparently rich com-
munities of family, pub and populated streets are shown to be
divided and mistrustful. Both end with a very simple scene which
signals the new orientation of the main character towards the
family after living through a nightmare caused in part by their
own hardness:

Mervyn Johns is simply shown, smiling, in a newspaper photo-
graph of the family group at his son's wedding, which he had
violently opposed.

Googie Withers sits up in bed after recovering from an attempt
to gas herself, smiles at her husband, and asks about her stepson.

Several of the later films repeat this structure, in their less
crowded settings. They ' strip down ' a family (or individual), lay
bare its hollowness; diagnose the coldness of the protagonist(s);
point them finally towards other people. See the final or near-final
shots of *The Spider and The Fly*, *The Long Memory*, *Father Brown*.
These resolutions are extremely simple in form without being
facile: they are the culmination of the work of the whole film,
of a process (in all but *Pink String*) of search: literally, by one
person for another (the title *The Spider and the Fly* is an ideal
one for Hamer) and metaphorically, for the roots of a personality.

Of the seven main Hamer films I have referred to, only *The
Scapegoat* and *Kind Hearts* do not have this distinctive climax,
which is related to a standard Ealing stance of commitment to
others and at the same time very different: Hamer has, as it were,

dismantled a structure, and is starting to put it together afresh.
· But these two films belong with the rest. *The Scapegoat*, an
unhappy project caught up between Ealing and MGM, and much
cut about before release, is still a film of great interest. Alec
Guinness plays a melancholy unattached Englishman who meets
his double, a French count, and is trapped into changing places.
He thus takes over a ready-made family, one which he finds to be
poisoned with bitterness. Gradually he grows into the role and
begins to form relationships and to repair their's. . . . Had it
been made under happier auspices one could have looked to this
for the culmination of Hamer's work, actually bringing to life
the kind of personal and communal fulfilment which the other
films only point towards at the end or evoke negatively by showing
its absence. But through a combination, one guesses, of external
and internal factors, this consummation never quite happens. As
it is, the dramatic device recalls *Dead of Night* – Guinness being
taken over completely by a ' mirror world ' – and reminds us how
personal to Hamer that starting point was.

Kind Hearts is the one film of Hamer's that is still current and
has a live reputation, fully deserved. The temptation is to see it
as an unaccountable masterpiece with no parallel in Hamer's
work, or at Ealing, or in the British cinema.[3] In this, there is a
grain of truth; but it is at least worth noting its continuities with
the rest of Hamer's work – no film could better fit the formula
' the stripping down of a family structure ' – and considering
why it is that the various attempts to follow in its wake (eg *A
Jolly Bad Fellow, Nothing but the Best, Drop Dead Darling*) look
so feeble in comparison. They lack the wit and elegance of *Kind
Hearts*, and they lack its motivating force; and these two things
are related.

Wit and elegance. Hamer wrote of his pleasure in ' using the
English language, which I love, in a more varied and, to me,
interesting way than I had previously had the chance of doing in
a film '.[4] One can easily illustrate this with eloquent passages;
Hamer's sophistication, both literary and cinematic (he was a
particular amateur of French cinema, as of France, the setting for
four of his films) sets him apart from most Ealing colleagues. But
the wit consists equally in things not said: in the tension behind
Louis's eight or nine successive, delicately nuanced answers of
' Yes ' in the House of Lords cross-examination, and the tensions
of his conversations with Sibella after she returns from her honey-
moon with Lionel. She complains she has married the most boring
man in London. Louis: ' in England '. Sibella: ' in Europe '. It is a
brilliant self-denial by Louis, and Hamer, to stop here and not
cap the exchange in the obvious way. Sibella has said she did not
enjoy her honeymoon at all. ' Not at all? ' ' Not at all '. Little is
spoken, much is understood. Sibella's wit, and her elegance, func-
tion as a mask for the strong feelings which she has betrayed in

marrying Lionel: her relationship with Louis has a latent sensuality which is quite out of the reach of the conventional vamp figures (usually played by Moira Lister) of this film's contemporaries.

Sibella: What am I doing?
Louis: You're playing with fire.
Sibella: At least it *warms* me.

Insofar as she is ' emotionally frozen ' (cf Anderson's remark) she acknowledges it and regrets it.

Louis, and the film, work on a similar principle. The visual wit is a matter mainly of ironic restraint, enacting Louis's calculated detachment from the events which he sets in motion and which he presents to us through the commentary which itself acts as an anti-feeling device.

The core of the film is Louis's mother. She has a rôle like that of the mother of *Citizen Kane*: seen only briefly, but frequently recalled, and psychologically central. There is a network of references that culminates in Louis's impressively serious quarrel with Lionel: ' I will not tolerate hearing my mother's name on your coarse tongue ' – an intensity of feeling which ironically leads to his arrest where his murders did not.

One doesn't wish to distort the film by suggesting that it is really a moral tract; but take away the obsessive family and class motivations for Louis's anarchic actions and it would fall apart. Any account of the film's ' chemistry ' would have essentially to explore this relationship between smooth surface and inner feeling, and to do justice to the delicate balance of irony and sincerity in Louis's voice-over comment that ' I am not naturally callous '.

*　　*　　*

Alexander Mackendrick

It may be that one could say more about Ealing through an extended study simply of Mackendrick's films than by the kind of discursive account .– trying to ' get everything in ' – that I have been attempting. Or even by an analysis, on the scale of the *Cahiers du Cinéma* text on *The Young Mr Lincoln* (translated in *Screen* v 13, n 3) of a single film, like *The Man in the White Suit*.

It is a commonplace that Ealing personnel were stronger at Ealing, as part of a team, than elsewhere. If Hamer is a partial exception, Mackendrick is a more spectacular one. He went straight from Ealing to New York to make, in 1956, *Sweet Smell of Success*. Especially as seen in the context of British '50s cinema, it was a dazzling achievement: though there is a very clear continuity, in themes and skills, with his Ealing work, it shows him evidently responding intensely to an environment of greater professionalism, energy, change. A similar thing happens, at a lower level, to his

when he moves to Hollywood and writes *It's a Mad Mad Mad Mad World* (1963), a film bearing the same relation to his Ealing work as *Sweet Smell of Success* to Mackendrick's. To both of these films Gavin Lambert provides an appropriate text in his *Screen* interview. On America:

' It often seems to me the most monstrous place on earth. Yet,
I do get a feeling that almost anything can happen. It could be
bad, it could be good. It very often is bad, but it could *happen*;
I don't get that feeling in England. I get the feeling that nothing
much happens; there is a stagnant quality there.'⁵

The response to the American scene itself implies a certain critical perspective on the British scene, and this is apparent in the films Mackendrick made at Ealing. Not that there is any doubt of his having been a committed member of the Ealing set-up: he worked for nearly a decade there and his films use regular Ealing people. But they are like no-one else's.

' For the children the spectacle was an absorbing one. Remember
that to them this was a pantomime: no word spoken to explain,
and so the eyes exercised a peculiar clearness '. From *A High Wind
in Jamaica* by Richard Hughes.

Hughes did some script-writing at Ealing around 1950. Mackendrick did not work with him but they met and discovered ideas in common.⁶ Adaptations of Hughes's novel had for years a place among Mackendrick's film projects, and he eventually made it in 1965. It is not hard to see why he was attracted to it.
    ' No word spoken to explain, and so the eyes exercised a peculiar clearness.' *Mandy* is a deaf and dumb child. *The Maggie* and *Sammy Going South*, as well as *A High Wind in Jamaica*, also have children at their centre and we to some extent see the world through their perception of it. But the Hughes line has a deeper appropriateness.
    ' I've got eyes, I put things together ' is the boast of the corrupt police chief in *Sweet Smell of Success* — a very unchildlike character. The line is a beautiful evocation of the way Mackendrick, with certain of his characters, operates, and of the way he asks the spectator to operate.
    No word spoken to explain. . . . The films have no lack of dialogue. Nor do they stand out for their moments of ' pure cinema ' in the classic manner. But Mackendrick is a notably cinematic, visually acute director, in a more meaningful sense than (say) Lean and Reed, the two British cinematic celebrities of the post-war years. It is above all his distinctive cinematic language, in the widest sense, that separates Mackendrick from his Ealing contemporaries and enables him to follow an individual path while

apparently fitting squarely into the Ealing tradition: four of his films were well-received Ealing Comedies.

One of the first scenes in his first film (*Whisky Galore*) is this: a soldier returns from abroad, by the regular boat service, to an island community which he knows well: he hopes he may be met. A crowd is waiting: he recognises friends, and smiles and waves. Though they are all looking towards him, no-one responds, and it is not that they have failed to recognise him (they do so easily enough a few moments later). Although he is in their field of vision they just do not ' see ' him.

The reason for this is that the island has run out of whisky, and the men are here to see if the boat has been able to bring any from the mainland. All they have eyes for is evidence of whisky.

All the films exploit this insight, that perception is not mechanical but a function of circumstances, motivation, preconceptions. At its simplest level it provides a device to put people at cross-purposes, setting up comedy situations.

In *The Man in the White Suit* no-one in the research laboratory notices Sidney Stratton's ' pirate ' apparatus, though it is quite openly displayed, and he contrives to get illicit access to a second laboratory because no-one looks twice at him· and wonders who he is. He has the knack, shared by several Mackendrick characters, of ' slipping in unnoticed '. The captain of *The Maggie* demonstrates it in the shipping office at the start. Both he and the Englishman, Pusey, are in the building for different purposes. Pusey is trying to hire a cargo boat for his American employer: the captain overhears him on the phone to this man explaining the difficulties, slips into the room, and is assumed by Pusey (momentarily alone) to be someone in good standing with the authorities — after all he seems to have the run of their offices. So the captain's offer of his own boat is welcomed. The two of them go out to the docks, and the captain stops by his modest ' puffer ', low in the water. Pusey sees it but doesn't see it. . . . Since he is expecting something larger, what he notices is the boat next to it. Out of this misunderstanding, fostered by the captain, the film develops.

The gang in *The Ladykillers* put their money, stolen from near King's Cross, into a trunk and load the trunk onto a taxi, which chugs into the station in full view of the police. Who, searching for a getaway car, would even glance at an arriving taxi?

These incidents are presented with no special visual bravura, simply with the essential, underestimated quality of lucidity. And they are integral to the total structure of the films.

Mackendrick's one non-comedy at Ealing was *Mandy*. While it is centred on a deaf and dumb child, it is just as much a film about (non-literal) blindness: its complex play on perceptions links it closely with the set of scenes referred to from the comedies, and

makes nonsense of the standard account of the film (insofar as there is one at all), namely that the ' documentary ' part dealing with Mandy herself and the school for the deaf is fine and moving, but that the adult drama surrounding it is conventional padding.

The film's meaning is crystallised in the relation between two close-up shots, at the start and end. When Mandy's deafness, as a baby, is first suspected, her parents decide to make a test. Her father stands behind her making loud noises. We get repeated close-ups of her head from his point of view: she does not turn round. The image has great weight, and we remember it; it carries the transition to the family's new life, coping with Mandy's deafness. At the end the image is repeated: the back of the head in close-up, with someone urging it to turn round in response, and the spectator too, as before, willing it to turn. This time it is the head of Mandy's father (Harry). It is his own father in turn who is trying to persuade him to listen and to ' see '.

Harry has disintegrated in the face of the problems raised by Mandy's case. First, he resists the idea of any proper training for her. His wife Christine is taken by a friend to look at a certain School for the Deaf and realises ' Harry saw this place '. But (the reply) ' Harry *didn't* see it, not properly anyway ' – what he did was to take one look and make an excuse to leave. Faced with a problem of challenge his instinct is to fall back on preconception and turn away. This happens when Christine's involvement with Mandy's training keeps her away from home: he at once resents her relationship with Mandy's headmaster. In each of two crucial, lucidly organised scenes we see this pair's relationship simultaneously from two viewpoints: the way it is (affectionate) and the way the prejudiced observer – Harry, then a gossiping neighbour – sees it (intimate). There is an intense irony in the way that Mandy's slow struggle to perceive and communicate goes in parallel with the adults' elementary failure to perceive and communicate.

The climax of this is Harry's surreptitious removal of Mandy from Christine (and the school) to his own parents' house. It is here that his father is roused from his own habitual state of self-absorption to challenge him, and that Mackendrick repeats the long-held back-of-head shot previously used of Mandy. In the end, Harry does turn round. There follows a marvellous shot with the camera simply tracking forward to the open door of their walled garden, looking out to the open space beyond. Moving from dark to light, it conveys Harry's ' enlightenment ', the release of seeing. And it is the same door which, for Mandy, leads from shelter to other people. Early in the film she unluckily strayed through it and was shattered by the world outside: now, stronger, she has passed through and is starting to explore and communicate. The image thus merges the two stories of the film, Mandy's and her parents': it enacts, like the repeated image of the head

turned away, their interdependence. Harry not perceiving is like Mandy not perceiving and helps to keep her that way (this has been established in detail). His outward-facing, now, is like her's, and at once is shown to reinforce it.

It is a mark of the dense organisation of the film that it takes so much story-telling to illustrate it at all adequately. Mackendrick's sophisticated use of visual forms, within a clear linear narrative, aligns him more with classical American cinema than with British. The story of Mandy is presented as something more than a touching case (though it is that) of a child's fight against handicaps. It is given a wider significance in a way that may (in the Ealing context) recall, but goes far beyond, the naive and artistically primitive generalising of *Halfway House*.

At one level it works as an acute analysis of the English – not only Harry – and their stifling of emotion. The imagery of turning-away permeates the film, and the lucid way it is organised and resolved expresses a critical perspective which is simply not there in the standard Ealing (and other) films of concealing and stifling to which one would relate it. But the implications are not so localised. These particular relationships belong to a vision which consistently presents people – not only the English – in terms of their deep individual *conditioning*. The way people perceive and act is conditioned by what they are, and want. Commonplace perhaps, but Mackendrick applies this with unusual rigour. In his films people are all in a sense like Mandy, locked inside a private world. The physical ability to perceive and communicate, which we watch Mandy acquiring, does not in itself accomplish very much. ' Reading ' a situation, and communicating effectively, are more than techniques, they are functions of the whole personality; similarly, one of McLuhan's ' extensions of man ', the telephone, an aid to communication, is in Mackendrick's films more commonly a spectacular obstacle to it, because, as the slave of its user, it has the ability to transmit, and to compound by ' fixing ' them, deceptions and misunderstandings. In *Sweet Smell of Success* no more than one out of a dozen phone calls passes on a message in a straightforward way. Mackendrick's films are intricate networks of failed communications; and *Mandy* is as central to his work as *The Miracle Worker* to Arthur Penn's.

Where the dynamic of *Mandy* is the direct drive towards clarity, the more usual one is a battle of wits opposing people of different conditioning and with different drives. Again, it sounds a commonplace dramatic formula. How sharp and distinctive the realisation is can be seen in another early sequence of *Whisky Galore*.

Three men are together in the village Post Office: Macroon (who runs it), and two Englishmen: Captain Waggett of the Home Guard, and his Sergeant (referred to above). By now it is known

that the ship abandoned and on the point of sinking just off the
island contains crates of whisky. It is late on Sunday night; the
islanders cannot break the Sabbath, but are waiting for midnight.

— Macroon wants the whisky brought ashore.
— Waggett is determined to prevent this, on principle.
— The Sergeant wants to marry Macroon's daughter.

Waggett's way of acting is, as always, straightforward. He says
what he thinks, and orders his Sergeant to keep guard on the
shoreline opposite the ship.

Macroon's manner is oblique. With Waggett, he is amusedly
non-committal. With the Sergeant, when they are left together,
he chats reflectively, in no hurry. In the course of it: ' You can't
have a wedding without a *reiteach* [traditional celebration], and
you can't have a *reiteach* without whisky '.

.The Sergeant is mildly shocked — this is ' blackmail '. The two
men look levelly at each other.

There is no further ' reaction ' from either, no cut to close-up,
no coy *emphasis* about it: it is as neutral a general shot, and
fade-out, as could be.

To annotate all the details in this brief scene would take two
pages. But the three-way exchange encapsulates the film.

— Macroon ' reads ' both men, and successfully conveys a message.
— The Sergeant reads.
— Waggett does neither.

Also: Mackendrick communicates and the spectator reads: an
analogy that will be valid all the way through.

With elaborate carelessness, the Sergeant allows some islanders
to put him out of action while the whisky is brought in. Waggett is
doomed to uncomprehending frustration at every point. While
he tackles people head-on, his antagonists are expert in dissem-
blance, inference, implication.

The structure of all four of the comedies Mackendrick made at
Ealing is summarised in Table 4. This helps both to indicate the
continuity in the work he did with different collaborators (though
the last two have the same writer in William Rose), and to avoid
clogging up the text even more than will happen anyway with the
filling in of stories.

Only *The Ladykillers* ends with the victory of the ' innocent ';
and here it is worth noting that Mrs Wilberforce, like the other
victors, is on her home ground.

The main structural difference in the Clarke comedies is that
there the communities and the innocents are one and the same.
Hue and Cry: the gang. *Passport to Pimlico:* the Burgundians.
The Titfield Thunderbolt: the train enthusiasts. *Barnacle Bill:*

138   Guinness and his associates on the pier. The films celebrate a
sentimental form of togetherness which prospers, broadly, by being
cheerful and nice. People are often ingenious but never intelligent,
and their adversaries are either too flatly villainous or too gentle
to be disturbing. And there is a difference in *tone*, whoever directed

Table Four — Mackendrick's Ealing Comedies

Title / location	'innocent' community	respective aims	chief manipulator
Whisky Galore / Hebridean island	Waggett, English officer / islanders	preventing salvage of whisky / salvaging it	Macroon, senior islander
The Man in the White Suit / Lancashire cotton town	Sidney, research scientist / Cotton industry	development of everlasting cloth / status quo	Kierlaw, senior industrialist
The Maggie / Scottish coast	Marshall, American tycoon + Pusey, English assistant / boat crew	efficient transport of furniture / keeping the job for themselves	Mactaggart (Captain) + Dougie (young crew member)
The Ladykillers / St. Pancras	Mrs. Wilberforce, landlady / criminal gang tenants	status quo / wages robbery nearby	Professor Marcus, gang leader

the films, which is as easy to recognise as it is hard to prove on
the page. Altogether − and this includes *The Lavender Hill Mob*,
with its gentle band of criminals − they constitute a whimsical
daydream of how things might be. Mackendrick's comedies are in
touch with how things actually operate.

The two Scottish comedies are centred on small ' backwater '
communities, but these are not sentimentalised. They are ruthless,
and shrewd. Ruthless in their treatment of Waggett and of Mar-
shall, basically well-meaning men who are crushed and humiliated.
Shrewd in their perceptions and calculations. This means for a
start that we can believe in their capacity for survival.

Because they have a solid, clear-sighted basis the positive com-
mitments − to each other, and to certain values − count for more.
Thus the central scene in *Whisky Galore* of the *reiteach* to cele-
brate the marriage of Macroon's two daughters communicates real
pleasure and a sense of community because it is so much more
than a warm ethnic set-piece. It is a different experience from the
pub celebrations of *Passport to Pimlico* and the cruise celebra-
tions of *Barnacle Bill*. Without shifting of gears the participants
are able to drop everything, when a warning comes, and renew
(brilliantly) the battle of wits with Waggett. The celebrations and
the shrewdness flow into one another. .

Likewise, the failings of Waggett and Marshall continue into
(or from) their personal lives. The deferential Mrs Waggett gives
the last twist of the knife to her husband by joining in the laugh-
ter at his final humiliation. And though she doesn't appear, Mrs
Marshall has, via phone conversations and messages, a leading
rôle in *The Maggie*. The elaborate plan to furnish the remote cot-
tage for a surprise birthday present, on which Marshall has ex-
pended so much grief, earns only her cold contempt. Neither man
has even been able to ' read ' his own wife.

Outside Mackendrick's work, how many British films have
intelligence as a central concern, valued in the characters as it is
expressed in the organisation of the film? In the context of a
national cinema whose characters and character are habitually
solid or stoical or drab or whimsical or moralistic − anything but
intelligent − it is an enormously refreshing quality.

So far I have in effect been building up to an outline of the
' ideal ' Mackendrick Ealing comedy, drawing mainly on *Whisky
Galore*. But inevitably no single one will quite correspond − even
in *Whisky Galore* various cross-currents complicate the picture.
There has to be a steady process of qualification. To the films'
detriment, in that the local realisation is uneven, especially in the
later films *The Maggie* and *The Ladykillers*. But also to the films'
advantage, in that the terms of the basic innocence/shrewdness
conflict are constantly varied. There is a development, an explora-
tion, which will continue in the post-Ealing films.

In *Whisky Galore* we are not likely to feel any regrets for the

islanders' triumphs. The whisky is life-enhancing, and Waggett pompous and stupid. Nevertheless it is interesting that Macken-drick is reported to have been torn apart, during the shooting, by his growing sympathy for Waggett's position; and that he wrote to *Time* magazine after their review of *The Maggie* explaining, in what reads as a by no means wholly tongue-in-cheek comment, that he and Rose 'saw the story very much from the point of view of the American', his treatment by the crew being 'savagely unfair'.[7] Which it is, while another level being richly deserved, as Rose and Mackendrick establish in the film which must have a greater authority than their comments on it. It is the tension be-tween these two responses that sustains the film. Clearly, one has to go further in defining the 'antinomies' in Mackendrick's work. Using the term 'innocent' for his protagonists begs too many questions. Innocence: taken one way, stupidity, in another, in-tegrity (though no single word can be a synonym). In *Mandy*, is the 'innocent' Mandy herself, or Harry? Similarly, shrewdness shades easily into exploitation, and corruption. The films are best considered in terms not of polarities but of a continuum, some-thing like this:

BLINDNESS	INNOCENCE	SHREWDNESS	CORRUPTION
stupidity	integrity	intelligence	
	instinct	exploitation	

– the positioning of the opposed parties, left or right on the line, varying according to the film, and to the spectator's own interpre-tation. It is a field for delicate discriminations, not for rigid moral judgment. And the distinctive factor, uniting the films, is not re-ducible to a specific message or commitment, it *is* the total struc-ture of the films, the terms of the conflicts, the manner of people's collisions.

All these abstractions become vitally alive in the second film Mackendrick made, *The Man in the White Suit*. The basic terms of the conflict played out in the remote setting of *Whisky Galore* are reworked in an ambitious analysis of an English industrial situa-tion. The result is perhaps the most intelligent of British films: it is certainly one of the most complex. Complex in its surface – its fluidity of composition and its interlocking of a large number of speaking parts. In its narrative – scene after scene is founded on a collision between two (or more) parties neither of whom quite realises what the other is getting at: often this is too quick and subtle for us to appreciate fully at the time, but it makes the film stand up uniquely well, for a British film, to repeated view-ings, and is engrossing enough for us not to mind that more than a third of the film goes by before the title is explained and the central conflict begins. Complex, too, in its structure. Perhaps the most convenient approach to the film, though it will not result in

a *full* account, is through the main character (Sidney Stratton:
Alex Guinness) and his fluctuating status.

There are four main stages:
   (1) At first, in terms of the chart (Table 4) it is he who is the
manipulator. By a form of camouflage, he has twice got himself
unauthorised facilities for research. His opportunism contrasts
with the lack of perception of those about him, and the stupidity
of the bosses.
   At the same time he is naive in his personal relationships
(especially in the scenes with Bertha: not ' reading ' her, either
as a union official concerned with his anomalous status, or as a
woman. At certain points as in *Mandy,* this naivete/blindness is
framed as a physical turning-away, just as the alertness of the
film's most positive character, Daphne, is signalled in the way she
turns round ' into the camera ').
   (2) After he makes the breakthrough (creating the formula for
a fibre that will not wear out or grow dirty) he behaves as an
' innocent '. His superiors remain foolish: so this section is a
comedy of errors.
   As soon as the formula works Sidney ' breaks cover '. Running
about wildly with his test-tube he is seized by the Head of Re-
search (!) who with stunning incuriosity pours its contents away
down a sink. His campaign to get a hearing from the bosses is
conducted head-on. They in turn are blind to him and to anything
unfamiliar. The charting of the two sides' encounter at Birnley's
house is extremely lucid and witty; only Daphne (Birnley's daugh-
ter) has the insight to understand and articulate what is happen-
ing and make them communicate with each other.
   Sidney thereupon works for Birnley: a partnership of innocents.
A characteristic scene: the measuring of Sidney for the proto-
type of the new everlasting suit. Birnley watches the operation
complacently from an armchair, while Sidney chats to the tailor
about the special techniques that will have to be used for cutting
the cloth (this can only be done at a very high temperature).
Though Sidney does not notice, the tailor has no idea what he is
talking about. After an initial close-up of Birnley, Mackendrick
takes the whole scene – unlike any other in the film – in one
static shot, emphasising the inertia of the scene within the dark,
heavy furnishings of Birnley's room. A *frame* of privilege and inertia
encloses a force that could work for change and ' democracy '. The
exchange encapsulates the film in a way comparable to the 3-way
scene at Macroon's house in *Whisky Galore*. Here, they are three
conditioned individuals with their obsessive private drives which
they fail to relate to one another: the tailor's craft, Sidney's
delight in research, Birnley's profits.
   (3) Sidney in the latter part of the film is innocence against
shrewdness. Like Waggett and Marshall, he is apparently ' in the

right ', but comes up against powerful interests which he cannot fully grasp, or therefore cope with.

After the scene with the tailor:
- Sidney shows off the prototype of the suit to Daphne. She enthuses about what his invention will do for ' millions of people all over the world '. He reacts not at all but stays turned away, ' deaf ' to the idea.
- The other mill-owners hear of the invention and at once start planning to block it.
- Bertha and her Union colleagues ask Sidney what is going on. He tells them. ' But if this stuff never wears out we'll have only one lot to make '. Sidney's unconcerned response is ' That's right '.
- Sidney goes in to what he thinks is the public launching of the new cloth and finds the leaders of the industry, including Birnley, assembled together. By slow degrees, he realises what they want, an agreement to suppress his invention. When he refuses to fall in with them he is forcibly shut away.

In this long sequence Sidney in brilliant white faces the bosses in black. It is the definitive confrontation of Mackendrick's films, Innocence and Experience in their most inclusive sense, with any simple black/white moral contrast undermined especially by Sidney's last two scenes: integrity *but* blindness, shrewdness *but* corruption.

While Sir John Kierlaw answers all Sidney's naïve questions, it is to Birnley that Sidney continues addressing himself. This is imperceptive. Yet it is also powerful, since it is Birnley whom he has trusted and who is responsible to him. Birnley himself feels awkward. Sidney's gaze at him is like a child's.

Kierlaw is magnificent: he grasps the situation, manipulates it effortlessly, and is quite unhypocritical, here as later. The other executives, in this crisis, communicate suddenly with the *Whisky Galore* islanders' kind of quickness, verbally and non-verbally. But there is obviously a limit to the admiration we can feel for any of them.

The moral stalemate is broken by Daphne. Joan Greenwood's role follows previous ones at Ealing in *Saraband for Dead Lovers* (as the Princess, victim of political intrigue: this was the previous script collaboration of Mackendrick and John Dighton, but Dearden directed it) and in *Whisky Galore* (as the Sergeant's bride, an important member of the community). Here, she has in her something of both characters. To his delight, she can speak Kierlaw's language. They soon come to an understanding that she will, for a large sum, seduce Sidney and persuade him to sell out. Having thus got access to him, she organises his escape — so that he can tell the newspapers.

The film's last section charts Sidney's struggle to get his
message through: like Mandy's struggle to say a word, it is a
simple project blocked by all kinds of practical and human ob-
stacles. He still wears the shining white suit, visually all too con-
spicuous and the emblem of his continued Innocence as he con-
tinues to make for his objective head-on. Lacking the ·full rail
fare to the nearest newspaper office (Manchester) he is completely
thrown: he has no other stratagem, and no skill at so manoeuvring
people, by little persuasions or deceptions, as to get there by other
means – a skill which ' even a child ' is capable of, as the little
girl in his old lodgings, where he finds himself caught and locked
up, consummately demonstrates. Freed by her, as by Daphne
earlier, he has to run from a crowd of now-united workers and
bosses. As he turns a corner he meets his old landlady Mrs Watson,
already established as a washerwoman in a small way and holding
some washing now. She refuses to help:

' Why can't you scientists leave well alone? What about my
bit of washing when there's no washing to do? '

A long close-up of Sidney, drained of the will to resist. The crowd
closes in, manhandles him, and finds the fabric of the suit coming
away in their hands. Laughter and humiliation, as, for Captain
Waggett at the end of *Whisky Galore*.

At one level it is breathtaking evasion. Mrs Watson's argument
settles the moral issue, and all problems can be forgotten since
the material wasn't stable anyway.

But in terms of the film's inner progress: the suit's disinte-
gration represents Sidney's loss of innocence. This he owes to Mrs
Watson. The long close-up that follows her words does not say
to the audience ' an unanswerable argument ', as gramatically as
it could: it shows Sidney for the first time beginning to grasp the
social complexity of the change he has set in motion. The union
officials didn't spell out the implications so clearly: he could say
' That's right ' without realising what they were getting at. The
bosses gave him abstract talk about the market, and brute force.
This is a direct, hostile question from someone previously a friend.

Throughout the last part of the film the two levels of British
film convention and inner logic have been perilously entangled.
This is true of the half-hearted love-scene between Daphne and
Sidney, redolent of a standard British film ploy which one could
summarise as: excusing absence of passion by implying that pas-
sion is being unselfishly suppressed. It is true of the action of the
attempted escape to Manchester, closely patterned on the multiple-
frustration stop-go routines of many British comedies including
Ealing ones (*A Run for your Money*, *The Lavender Hill Mob*). And
it is true of the resolution, akin to so many essentially arbitrary
twists employed by writers to tie up plots (cf *Another Shore*,
Passport to Pimlico). While using and transcending the conven-

tions it also partakes of them rather too comprehensively – a judgment that can only be checked against an actual viewing of the film since it depends so much upon tone. I would express it like this: the film is to this extent an apology for itself, is *about* the things that seduce it into following these conventions, is about the reasons why it has to evade the issues which a stable fibre would raise, and why its escape and romance scenes have to be so stunted. The reasons lie in the nature of the society that has been analysed.

Everyone is conditioned to his or her role and will rally to stick to it, and rally to the status quo – either blindly, or by summoning up all their shrewdness in defence of it. Kierlaw is literally summoned from London. He, the industry's brain, is ancient, and the whole casting of the film reinforces the sense of a society anxious, as it ages, to keep on doing the familiar thing, this being the role of the actors themselves in post-war British films. Ernest Thesiger as Kierlaw, Miles Malleson as the tailor, Edie Martin as Mrs Watson.

The shrewdness of the islanders in *Whisky Galore* has given place, in this context, to something merely obstructive: the opposition is a sterile one. There is nothing dynamic in the industrial ' community ' that closes ranks against Sidney. Its unity is temporary and opportunistic. Two brilliant details among many illustrate its essentially stagnant and compartmentalised nature: the tone of voice in which one of the mill-owners, answering the telephone during a worker/management gathering, asks around the room for ' someone called Bertha ', and the action of the Research controller, an outraged bureaucrat, is pouring Sidney's new formula down the sink.

The dynamic element in the film, Sidney's creativity, has no chance unless it can begin to meet Kierlaw on his own ground and to take into account other people's motivations – to be intelligent. The end of the film, as he walks away contemplating new research, could be a beginning.

Mackendrick's subsequent films attempt to find other, less sterile accommodations between innocence and experience, to break down the opposition diagnosed in this particular English context.

One index of this is the strengthening of the ' innocent ' element. Daphne, and the child at the end, are significant figures in *The Man in the White Suit*, though their final influence is small. In the first post-Ealing film, *Sweet Smell of Success*, the way in which the girl, Susie, moves from being a victim of the corrupt PR world surrounding her to adopting some of her oppressors' own skills, and thus confounding them, marks a development of Daphne's role. Susie starts as a lost child, but the Tony Curtis character can tell her bitterly at the end ' You're growing up ' (compare the union official to Sidney: ' You're not even born yet '). More commonly the protagonists are, as one might expect, actual children, whose com-

bination of ' innocence ' with keen perception is a reminder of the
lines referred to above from *A High Wind in Jamaica* and of the
affinity that exists between Mackendrick and Richard Hughes.

  Mandy Miller, after her brief appearance at the end of *The Man
in the White Suit*, plays the name part in *Mandy*. The blend, in the
under-age crew member (Dougie) of *The Maggie*, of instinct and
shrewd calculation, and of sympathy and ruthlessness towards
Marshall, makes him the real centre of that film. The climax of this
development will to my mind be not *A High Wind* itself but
Mackendrick's preceding and under-rated *Sammy Going South*:
with perhaps the high point of all his work found in the relation-
ship between the young Sammy and the old Cocky Wainwright
(Edward G Robinson). However this is not the place, in an article
based on Ealing, to give this body of films the detailed attention
that it merits and to explore the implications of the development
within Mackendrick's films that I have outlined. It is enough to
stress that here is an Ealing director who does produce work of
serious interest both within the studio and outside it; and that he
moves away from not only Ealing but England. Dougie is a Scot;
and though the children of *Sammy* and *A High Wind* are English,
they are travelling in distant parts, their expatriate English parents
being evoked mainly through the *collapsing houses* at the start of
those two films. Indeed, destroyed buildings and wrecked ships are
a remarkable recurring feature in Mackendrick's films, and con-
tribute to a sense that one strong impulse in them is the rejection
of much of ' civilisation ' altogether for a more primitive ' tribal '
community: the communion in the wilds between Sammy and
Cocky is in a sense coming full circle to *Whisky Galore* (Cocky is
a diamond smuggler), and the return to adult/city life at the end
of *Sammy* and its successor is a pointed anti-climax.

  But *The Ladykillers* (set in another collapsing house, on the tilt
through subsidence) is specifically English – a valediction to England
and Ealing – a surrealistic vision of England, literally dreamed up
by William Rose and working with a dream-like logic. (The whole
film could, if one chooses, be seen as the dream of Mrs Wilberforce.)

  It is tempting to wrap up this account of Mackendrick, and
Ealing, with a neat analysis of the film in terms like this, reading it
as a fable of England as *San Demetrio* was interpreted earlier. Two
films at the start and end of a movement, projecting England. But
the stress at this point needs to be on the limitations of the kind
of intuitive analogies in which I have been indulging, and on the
hard intellectual work that has to be done to establish useful hypo-
theses about the relation of a body of films to a society, and of
individual film-makers to the context in which they operate. This
is in line with Edward Buscombe's apt comments in a review of
Jeffrey Richards's book *Visions of Yesterday (Screen Education*
No 9):

146   ' The relation of a film to an ideology, or, to put it in Metzian
terms, of cinematic codes to extra-cinematic or cultural codes, is an
extremely complex business, the methodology for which is only
starting to be explored.'

I hope at least that what I have written will have the function of
pointing the way to some subjects for more research. For instance:
– The nature of the continuities between the 1930s Documentary
movement and Ealing. This would involve investigation of the
wartime propaganda shorts which I have neglected.
– The important relationship in the postwar decade between film
industry, government, and press, including the way in which they
frequently support each other's chauvinist instincts.
– The relation of Ealing to its contemporaries, studied through the
analysis both of films, and of studio systems and the movement of
personnel.
– The further study of areas of Ealing production. There are signs
that this is attracting more interest than before, and I hope that
John Ellis's projected analysis (for the Centre for Contemporary
Cultural Studies) of *Passport to Pimlico* will in time be published.
Meanwhile it seemed to me that one of the arears that would be
most rewarding to detailed analysis is the collaboration, on *The
Maggie* and *The Ladykillers*, of Mackendrick and William Rose.

Rose is an American whose scripts indicate a distinctive affection-
ate/detached response to English life and English moods. A par-
ticular Rose trademark is the monologue about Pangbourne (Berks),
used in *Genevieve* and *The Ladykillers* (as later in *It's a Mad
World*) to evoke a leisured, backward-looking way of life; his films
are saturated with images of age and tradition, both institutional
and private. But only with Mackendrick is he enabled, as it were,
to ' get out from under ' this encrusted traditionalism. All of his
Ealing films (and the quasi-Ealing *Genevieve* and *The Smallest
Show on Earth*) have a circular structure, ending where they began,
often with a denial of ambition and a return to the family (literal
or metaphorical). In the case of *Touch and Go*, for instance, the
result is a work of extreme tiredness and stagnation in the manner
of *The Rainbow Jacket*. It in fact is the ' twin ' of *The Ladykillers*
in that both were written by Rose and produced by Seth Holt, shot
in colour in 1955, and centred on one particular old house in a
London neighbourhood community.

Purporting to work out a compromise between youth and change
on the one hand and age and tradition on the other, *Touch and Go*
is profoundly in thrall to, permeated by, the latter pair, whereas
the confidence with which *The Ladykillers* pushes its story and
imagery to extremes (subsidence, St Pancras station, Churchill,
Queen Victoria, a tea party of genteel little old ladies, etc), and
incorporates the distinctive Mackendrick structure of conflicts, gives
to the victory of the status quo a quite different resonance.

But this is statement not analysis: it identifies one area with
which a new stage of Ealing textual and contextual analysis could
deal. And if this lengthy account of Mackendrick's work has a
value it is in helping the contribution of one main Ealing ' author '
to be perceived. It is intended, like this survey as a whole, to be
a beginning, a clearing of the ground, not an end in itself.-

Notes
1. Lindsay Anderson interviewed by John Gelmis in *The Film Direc-*
2. *The Times,* December 5, 1949.
3. See for instance Frederic Raphael's introduction to his script for
4. *The Cinema 1952,* pp 52f.
5. Gavin Lambert in *Screen,* Summer 1972, p 65.
6. BBC radio interview with Mackendrick by Paul Mayersberg, broad-
   cast 1965.
7. *Time,* October 25, 1954.
8. Balcon, *A Lifetime of Film,* p 167.

Author's Note
Some printing errors in Part 1 (v 15 n 1) should be mentioned.
p 88: Seth Holt intended *Nowhere to Go* to be the least, not the
last, Ealing film ever made. In Table 2 (p 91), Dearden's date of
joining Ealing should be 1937; the column headings have become
confused and should be spaced as in Table 1. The footnote to p 117
appears on p 118. Moreover, the end notes 41-48 do not belong
with the rest, since they relate to the section of text printed in
this issue.
   The last point reflects a problem raised by the form in which all
this material has had to appear. The original intention had been to
put all or most of the documentation at the start, to follow it with
a shorter text, and to use the more modest title of ' Ealing — Data
+ Commentary '. I agreed to change this, to extend the text, and
for it to appear in two parts, but it was not planned that *all* the
documentation should go in Part 2. The present arrangement has
conferred on the text of Part 1, standing alone as it does, an unduly
privileged status.
   I refer to this not out of pedantry, but because it bears on the
broader issues of the limitations of this text and, also, of its some-
what anomalous appearance within the pages of *Screen.* I am aware
of its distinctness from the main body of what has been appearing
in the magazine (this applies in particular to part 2 with its tradi-
tional kind of ' auteur ' emphasis), and the Editorial Board are
obviously aware of it too. Alan Lovell has made some comments
informally which are helpful in provoking a rationale. He feels that
the account given of the Ealing system and product is insufficiently
thorough: that the valid procedure would have been to trace and
cross-reference all Ealing contributors (including editors and

148   cameramen) and to establish authoritatively what the 'Ealing norms' were, in terms of narrative forms, camera style, etc: then to consider how the body of work of an individual related to these norms. To some extent this has to be accepted, as a counsel of perfection, and I was careful to disclaim for Part 1 (see eg pp 89, 99) the status of a definitive account. Apart from all issues of personal judgment and of 'theoretical framework' (referred to in the last editorial) this leaves a question whether an incomplete and perhaps methodologically naive account can be worth having – may, in practice, be a necessary step on the way to that great coherent analysis of the British cinema which is so often called for, without the call itself bringing it nearer.

Peter Wollen observed in 1969 that 'the English cinema . . . is still utterly amorphous, unclassified, unperceived' (*Signs and Meaning*, p 115). Alan Lovell and Jim Hillier in the foreword to their *Studies in Documentary* (1972) make a similar point about the large gaps in discussion, exploration and documentation. *Screen* has for some time professed a commitment editorially to the exploration of British film culture, but this has as yet led to no exemplary work on British films as distinct from interview material and comments on British criticism. The severe editorial comment on John Smith's article (in v 13 n 2) on the English films of Hitchcock was followed up by no alternative readings of these or related films. Why this barrenness?

Clearly, when Ben Brewster introduces into the discussion of *The Young Mr Lincoln*, and of the *Cahiers* text on the film, the notion of 'the Fordian sub-code', he is exploiting a common recognition of certain characteristics of Ford's work (v 14, n 3). It is, I think, the sheer lack of available knowledge about the British cinema at even a basic descriptive level that inhibits discussion at a more sophisticated level: reference in a similar context to, for instance, a 'Mackendrick sub-code' would be difficult when his work has scarcely been identified. These articles on Ealing are intended to clear some ground, make available some knowledge and tentative judgments, and to provide, especially in the documentation; tools for further work. It is essentially 'work in progress', and I am conscious of an unresolved tension between (a) material gestated over a long period, notably that on Mackendrick (planned some time ago as a conventional kind of director monograph) and (b) material incompletely researched: that on Ealing and its output in general (embarked on mainly out of recognition of the limitations of any such study done in isolation). However, to quote a dictum from Iris Murdoch's *The Black Prince*, 'If one is prepared to publish a work one must let it speak for itself. It would be unthinkable to run along beside it whimpering " I know it's no good " ' – this is not the emphasis I intend.

List of Ealing features

These are listed in the order of (and dated by) their first showing in London. As stated above, a number of wartime propaganda films made at Ealing, mainly shorts, have been disregarded.

Balcon's own name has been omitted from the outline credits. On all the films, either he is named as 'Producer' or, less frequently, the film is a Michael Balcon Production with full producer credit given to another. Credits given are:

  d: Director
  p: Producer
  ap: Associate Producer
  s: Screenplay

On the screenplay, names following a + sign are those given a subsidiary credit eg Additional Dialogue. Exact script credits are often elusive, being abbreviated in publicity material. Where possible, credits have been noted from the screen. For other than original screenplays, the source also is normally indicated.

The main star or stars are given for each film plus certain regular 'Ealing faces' among the supporting cast. The following actors are listed (surname only) wherever they appear:

Stars and second-rank stars (all with four or more Ealing appearances):

Robert Beatty	Alexander Knox
Derek Bond	Moira Lister
Edward Chapman	Ralph Michael
John Clements	John Mills
David Farrar	Cecil Parker
George Formby	Basil Radford
Joan Greenwood	Chips Rafferty
John Gregson	Michael Redgrave
Alec Guinness	George Relph
Jimmy Hanley	Susan Shaw
Jack Hawkins	Anthony Steel
Will Hay	Godfrey Tearle
Stanley Holloway	Tommy Trinder
Sally Ann Howes	Jack Warner
Gordon Jackson	Naunton Wayne
Mervyn Johns	Googie Withers

Character actors:

This list is more selective, with an attempt to pick out actors whose accumulation of Ealing roles is particularly distinctive. The actual number of appearances is not a criterion, which explains the omission of players like Sidney James, Megs Jenkins, and Sam Kydd. It is certain both that the list could be improved, and that some appearances by listed actors have been missed, since their names frequently do not appear in cast lists.

Dorothy Alison	James Robertson Justice
Joss Ambler	Geoffrey Keen
Grace Arnold	Jack Lambert
Felix Aylmer	Bernard Lee
Howard Marion Crawford	Garry Marsh
Meredith Edwards	Edie Martin
Harry Fowler	Frederick Piper
James Hayter	Edward Rigby
Gladys Henson	Charles Victor
Vida Hope	

Credits for editor, director of photography, art director and composer
are omitted for reasons of space, although where an editor (for instance)
went on to direct at Ealing, his editing credits are given within his
personal career details at the end. A more detailed breakdown of credits
would bring out continuities more clearly and also allow the nature
of specifically Ealing cinema to be better analysed by developing cross-
reference between people's work at Ealing and outside it. Some non-
Ealing credits are given for directors and writers, but this work of
cross-reference (which should cover actors as well, eg relating Guinness's
comedy roles at Ealing to those elsewhere) is something which, essen-
tially, remains to be done.

Those directors, writers and producers who are referred to in the
film listings by surname only are the subject of entries in the section
on personnel at the end.

1938

The Gaunt Stranger *d* Forde *ap* S C Balcon *s* Sidney Gilliat *ex* novel
Edgar Wallace
Sonnie Hale, Wilfred Lawson, Knox

1939

The Ware Case *d* Stevenson *ap* S. C. Balcon *s* Stevenson, Pertwee +
Emmett
Clive Brook, Jane Baxter + Rigby
Let's Be Famous *d* Forde *s* Macdougall, Allan Mackinnon
Jimmy O'Dea, Betty Driver, Sonnie Hale + Radford, Marsh
Trouble Brewing *d* Kimmins *p* Jack Kitchin *s* Kimmins, Macphail,
Michael Hogan
Formby, Withers, Marsh + Radford
The Four Just Men *d* Forde *ap* S C Balcon *s* Macphail, Nolbandov,
Pertwee *ex* novel Edgar Wallace
Anna Lee, Griffith Jones, + Chapman, Marsh, Pertwee
There Ain't No Justice *d* Tennyson *ap* Nolbandov *s* Tennyson,
Nolbandov, James Curtis
Hanley, Rigby + Chapman
Young Man's Fancy *d* Stevenson *ap* S C Balcon *s* Pertwee + Emmett,
Rodney Ackland *ex* story Stevenson
Griffith Jones, Anna Lee + Rigby, Aylmer
Cheer Boys Cheer *d* Forde *ap* S C Balcon *s* Macdougall, Allan
Mackinnon *ex* story Ian Dalrymple, Donald Bull
Nova Pilbeam, Edmund Gwenn + Knox
Come On George *d* Kimmins *p* Jack Kitchin *s* Kimmins, Leslie Arliss,
Val Valentine
Formby, Pat Kirkwood + Ambler, Hayter

1940

Return to Yesterday *d* Stevenson *ap* S C Balcon *s* Stevenson, Pertwee,
Macphail *ex* play Robert Morley
Clive Brook, Anna Lee + Marsh
The Proud Valley *d* Tennyson *ap* Nolbandov *s* Tennyson, Jack Jones,
Louis Golding *ex* story Herbert Marshall, Alfredda Brilliant
Paul Robeson, Chapman + Rigby
Let George Do It *d* Varnel *ap* Dearden *s* Macphail, Dearden, Dighton,
Melford
Formby, Phyllis Calvert + Marsh, Lee
Saloon Bar *d* Forde *ap* Culley Forde *s* Macphail, Dighton *ex* play
Frank Harvey jr

Gordon Harker, Elisabeth Allen + Johns, Aylmer
Convoy d Tennyson *ap* Nolbandov *s* Tennyson, Patrick Kirwan
   Clive Brook, Clements + Chapman, Rigby, Johns
Sailors Three d Forde *ap* Culley Forde *s* Macphail, Melford
   Dighton, Trinder, Claude Hulbert + Hayter

1941

Spare a Copper d Carstairs *ap* Dearden *s* Macdougall, Dearden,
   Melford
   Formby, Dorothy Hyson + Lee
Ghost of St Michael's d Varnel *ap* Dearden *s* Macphail
   Dighton, Hay, Charles Hawtrey + Aylmer
Turned Out Nice Again d Varnel *ap* Dearden *s* Melford *ex* play
   Hugh Mills, Wells Root
   Formby, Peggy Bryan + Chapman
Ships With Wings d Nolbandov *ap* S C Balcon *s* Patrick Kirwan,
   Melford, Morgan, Nolbandov
   Clements, Leslie Banks, Jane Baxter + Parker, Chapman, Victor

1942

Black Sheep of Whitehall d Hay, Dearden *ap* S C Balcon *s* Macphail,
   Dighton
   Hay, Mills + Aylmer, Ambler
The Big Blockade d Frend *ap* Cavalcanti *s* Macphail
   Leslie Banks + Mills, Redgrave, Hay, Piper
Next of Kin d Dickinson *ap* S C Balcon *s* Dickinson; Macphail,
   Dighton + Basil Bartlett
   Johns, Nova Pilbeam + Ambler, Victor, Hawkins, Wayne, Radford
The Foreman Went to France d Frend *ap* Cavalcanti *s* Macphail,
   Dighton, Leslie Arliss *ex* story J B Priestley
   Clifford Evans, Constance Cummings, Trinder + Jackson, Johns,
   Victor
The Goose Steps Out d Hay, Dearden *ap* S C Balcon *s* Dighton,
   Macphail *ex* story Bernard Miles, Reg Groves
   Hay, Charles Hawtrey
Went the Day Well d Cavalcanti *ap* S C Balcon *s* Dighton, Morgan,
   Macphail *ex* story Graham Greene
   Leslie Banks + Farrar, Rigby, Johns, Fowler, Arnold

1943

The Bells Go Down d Dearden *ap* S C Balcon *s* Macdougall +
   Stephen Black
   Trinder, James Mason + Johns
Nine Men d Watt *ap* Crichton *s* Watt *ex* story Gerald Kersh
   Lambert, Jackson + Piper
My Learned Friend d Dearden, Hay *ap* S C Balcon *s* Dighton,
   Macphail
   Hay, Claude Hulbert, Johns + Victor
Undercover d Nolbandov *ap* S C Balcon *s* Dighton, Danischewsky
   ex story George Slocombe
   Clements, Tom Walls + Tearle, Victor

1944

San Demetrio London d Frend [+Hamer] *ap* Hamer *s* Hamer, Frend
   ex narrative F Tennyson Jesse
   Walter Fitzgerald, Michael, Beatty + Johns, Jackson, Piper, Victor

Halfway House d Dearden *ap* Cavalcanti *s* Macphail, Morgan +
Clarke, Pertwee *ex* play Denis Ogden
Johns, Françoise Rosay, Tom Walls + Howes, Ambler
For Those in Peril d Crichton *ap* S C Balcon *s* Watt, J O C Orton,
Clarke *ex* story Richard Hillary
Michael, Farrar
They Came to a City d Dearden *ap* Cole *s* Dearden, Cole *ex* play
J B Priestley
Clements, Withers
Champagne Charlie d Cavalcanti *ap* John Croydon *s* Melford,
Macphail, Morgan
Trinder, Holloway, Jean Kent + Fowler, Piper, Justice, Hope
Fiddlers Three d Watt [+ Hamer] *ap* Hamer *s* Watt, Morgan
Trinder, Frances Day, Sonnie Hale + Piper, Justice

1945

Johnny Frenchman d Frend *ap* S C Balcon *s* Clarke
Françoise Rosay, Tom Walls + Michael, Piper, Arnold
Painted Boats d Crichton *ap* Cornelius *s* Stephen Black + Louis
Macneice
Jenny Laird, Bill Blewett + Arnold, Fowler
Dead of Night d Dearden, Cavalcanti, Hamer, Crichton *ap* Cole, John
Croydon s John V Baines, Macphail + Clarke *ex* stories Baines,
Macphail, E F Benson, H G Wells
Johns + Withers, Howes, Michael, Radford, Wayne, Redgrave, Marsh
Pink String and Sealing Wax d Hamer *ap* S C Balcon *s* Morgan +
Hamer *ex* play Pertwee
Johns, Jackson, Withers + Howes, Marsh, Piper

1946

The Captive Heart d Dearden *ap* Relph *s* Macphail, Guy Morgan
ex story Patrick Kirwan
Redgrave   + Johns, Warner, Henson, Jackson, Bond, Radford,
Michael, Lambert, Arnold
The Overlanders d Watt [+ Norman] *ap* Smart (Australia) *s* Watt
Rafferty, Daphne Campbell

1947

Hue and Cry d Crichton, *ap* Cornelius *s* Clarke
Fowler, Warner, Alastair Sim + Piper, Hope, Lambert, Arnold
Nicholas Nickleby d Cavalcanti *ap* John Croydon *s* Dighton *ex*
Dickens
Bond, Cedric Hardwicke + Howes, Holloway, Hayter, Hope
The Loves of Joanna Godden d Frend [+ Hamer] *ap* Cole *s* H E
Bates, Macphail *ex* novel Sheila Kaye-Smith
Withers, Jean Kent, John McCallum + Bond, Rafferty, Rigby, Piper,
Arnold
Frieda d Dearden *ap* Relph *s* Macphail, Ronald Millar
Farrar, Glynis Johns, Mai Zetterling + Henson, Marsh
It Always Rains on Sunday d Hamer *ap* Cornelius *s* Macphail, Hamer,
Cornelius *ex* novel Arthur la Bern
Withers, John McCallum + Chapman, Shaw, Hanley, Warner, Piper,
Arnold, Martin, Hope, Henson

1948

Against the Wind d Crichton *ap* Cole *s* Clarke, Michael Pertwee,
P V Carroll *ex* story J Elder Wills

Beatty, Simone Signoret + Warner, Jackson, Justice
Saraband for Dead Lovers d Dearden *ap* Relph *s* Dighton, Macken-
drick *ex* novel Helen Simpson
Stewart Granger, Greenwood, Françoise Rosay
Eureka Stockade d Watt [+ Smart] *ap* Norman (Australia) *s* Watt,
Walter Greenwood
Rafferty, Jane Barrett + Lambert, Jackson, Alison
Another Shore d Crichton *ap* Ivor Montagu *s* Walter Meade *ex* novel
Kenneth Reddin
Beatty, Lister, Holloway + Martin
Scott of the Antarctic d Frend *ap* Cole *s* Walter Meade, Ivor
Montagu
Mills + Bond, Justice, Gregson

1949

Passport to Pimlico d Cornelius [+ Truman] *ap* Emmett *s* Clarke
Holloway + Piper, Radford, Wayne, Hayter, Arnold
Whisky Galore d Mackendrick *ap* Danischewsky *s* Compton Macken-
zie, Macphail *ex* novel Mackenzie
Radford + Greenwood, Jackson, Justice, Gregson
Kind Hearts and Coronets d Hamer *ap* Relph *s* Hamer, Dighton
ex novel Roy Horniman
Dennis Price, Valerie Hobson, Guinness, Greenwood
Train of Events d Cole, Crichton, Dearden *ap* Relph *s* Dearden,
Clarke, Ronald Millar, Macphail
Valerie Hobson, Warner, Clements + Shaw, Henson, Gregson
A Run for Your Money d Frend *ap* Norman *s* Richard Hughes,
Frend, Norman + Morgan *ex* story Clifford Evans
Donald Houston, Lister, Guinness + Rigby
The Blue Lamp d Dearden *p* Relph *s* Clarke, Ted Willis, Jan Read
+ Mackendrick
Warner, Hanley, Dirk Bogarde + Lee, Henson, Edwards, Piper,
Steel

1950

Dance Hall d Crichton *ap* Emmett *s* Emmett, Morgan,
Mackendrick
Natasha Parry, Donald Houston + Henson, Arnold
Bitter Springs d Smart *ap* Norman (Australia) *s* Lipscomb, Dani-
schewsky
Trinder, Rafferty, Jackson
Cage of Gold d Dearden *ap* Relph *s* Whittingham, Paul Stein
Jean Simmons, Farrar + Lee, Henson
The Magnet d Frend *ap* Cole *s* Clarke
Stephen Murray, Kay Walsh, William [James] Fox + Edwards,
Ambler, Henson, Justice, Arnold

1951

Pool of London d Dearden *ap* Relph *s* Whittingham, John
Eldridge
Bonar Colleano, Shaw, Lister + Justice
The Lavender Hill Mob d Crichton *ap* Truman *s* Clarke
Guinness, Holloway + Gregson, Edwards, Martin
The Man in the White Suit d Mackendrick *ap* Cole *s* Dighton,
Macdougall, Mackendrick *ex* play Macdougall
Guinness, Greenwood + Parker, Hope, Martin, Crawford

Where No Vultures Fly *d* Watt *ap* Norman (Africa) s Lipscomb, Smart, Norman *ex* story Watt
Anthony Steel, Dinah Sheridan + Edwards

1952

His Excellency *d* Hamer *p* Truman *s* Hamer + Lipscomb *ex* play Dorothy & Campbell Christie
Eric Portman, Parker + Chapman, Keen, Crawford
Secret People *d* Dickinson *p* Cole *s* Dickinson, Wolfgang Wilhelm *ex* story Dickinson + Joyce Cary
Valentina Cortesa, Serge Reggiani, Audrey Hepburn
I Believe in You *d* Dearden *p* Relph *s* Whittingham, Relph, Dearden *ex* memoir Sewell Stokes
Celia Johnson, Parker, Tearle + Fowler, G Relph, Henson
Mandy *d* Mackendrick *p* Norman *s* Nigel Balchin, Whittingham *ex* novel Hilda Lewis
Phyllis Calvert, Hawkins, Mandy Miller, Terence Morgan + Chapman, Tearle, Alison
The Gentle Gunman *d* Dearden *p* Relph *s* Macdougall *ex* own play
Mills, Dirk Bogarde, Beatty

1953

The Titfield Thunderbolt *d* Crichton *p* Truman *s* Clarke
Holloway, Gregson, G Relph + Wayne, Tearle, Martin
The Cruel Sea *d* Frend *p* Norman *s* Eric Ambler *ex* novel Nicholas Monsarrat
Hawkins, Donald Sinden + Edwards
Meet Mr Lucifer *d* Antony Pelissier *p* Danischewsky *s* Danischewsky + Peter Myers, Alec Grahame
ex play Arnold Ridley
Holloway, Peggy Cummins + Jackson, Victor, Henson, Martin, Keen
The Square Ring *d* Dearden *p* Relph *s* Robert Westerby + Peter Myers, Alec Grahame *ex* play Ralph Peterson
Warner, Beatty

1954

The Love Lottery *d* Crichton *p* Danischewsky *s* Harry Kurnitz + Danischewsky *ex* story Charles Neilson, Terry, Zelma Bramley Moore
David Niven, Peggy Cummins + Victor, Aylmer
The Maggie *d* Mackendrick *p* Truman *s* Rose
Paul Douglas, Alex Mackenzie + Keen, Alison
West of Zanzibar *d* Watt *p* Norman (Africa) *s* Whittingham, Max Catto *ex* story Watt
Steel, Sheila Sim + Crawford
The Rainbow Jacket *d* Dearden *p* Relph *s* Clarke
Bill Owen, Kay Walsh + Victor, Crawford, Piper
Lease of Life *d* Frend *ap* Jack Rix *s* Ambler *ex* story Frank Baker, Patrick Jenkins
Robert Donat, Kay Walsh + Hope, Piper, Martin
The Divided Heart *d* Crichton *p* Truman *s* Whittingham + Richard Hughes
Yvonne Mitchell, Cornell Borchers + Keen, Knox

1955

Out of the Clouds *d* Dearden *p* Relph *ap* Eric Williams *s* Relph, John Eldridge

Beatty, Steel + Justice, Lee, Lambert

The Night My Number Came Up d Norman *ap* Tom Morahan *s* R C
    Sheriff *ex* story Air Marshal Sir Victor Goddard
    Redgrave, Sheila Sim, Knox
The Ship that Died of Shame d Dearden *p* Relph *s* John Whiting,
    Relph, Dearden *ex* novel Nicholas Monsarrat
    Richard Attenborough, George Baker + Lee
Touch and Go d Truman *ap* Holt *s* Rose *ex* story with
    Tania Rose
    Hawkins, Margaret Johnston + Hayter
The Ladykillers d Mackendrick *ap* Holt *s* Rose
    Guinness, Parker +Warner, Martin

1956

Who Done It? d Dearden *p* Relph *s* Clarke
    Benny Hill, Belinda Lee + Marsh
The Feminine Touch d Pat Jackson *ap* Jack Rix *s* (uncredited) *ex*
    novel Sylvia Ashton Warner
    George Baker, Belinda Lee + Ambler, Alison
The Long Arm d Frend *ap* Tom Morahan *s* Robert Barr, Janet Green
    + Dorothy & Campbell Christie *ex* story Barr
    Hawkins + Keen, Edwards, Ambler, Alison

Six MGM/Ealing films (Elstree Studios):
1957

Man in the Sky d Crichton *ap* Holt *s* Rose, John Eldridge *ex* story
    Rose
    Hawkins, Elisabeth Sellars + Crawford
The Shiralee d Norman *ap* Jack Rix (Australia) *s* Neil Paterson,
    Norman *ex* novel d'Arcy Niland
    Peter Finch, Elisabeth Sellars
Barnacle Bill d Frend *ap* Dennis van Thal *s* Clarke
    Guinness + Piper
Davy d Relph *p* Dearden *s* Rose
    Harry Secombe + G Relph, Shaw, Knox, Henson

1958

Dunkirk d Norman *ap* Michael Forlong *s* Lipscomb, David
    Divine
    Mills, Richard Attenborough + Lee, Edwards, Piper
Nowhere to Go d Holt *ap* Eric Williams *s* Holt, Kenneth Tynan
    ex novel Donald Mackenzie
    George Nader, Maggie Smith + Lee, Crawford, Keen

One ABPC/Ealing film:
1959

The Siege of Pinchgut d Watt *ap* Eric Williams (Australia) *s* Watt,
    Jon Cleary + Alexander Baron *ex* story Inman Hunter, Lee
    Robinson
    Aldo Ray, Heather Sears

Bibliography

This is a selective list, limited in two ways: 1. It excludes the less useful
books that exist on British Cinema in favour of those which provide
some form of genuine information or analysis bearing directly or

indirectly on Ealing. \2. It does not offer a digest of the contemporary newspaper and magazine material on British Cinema which is bound, when properly explored, to be an important source.

1. *On British Cinema, with some reference or relevance to Ealing.*

BALCON, MICHAEL (with Forsyth Hardy, Ernest Lindgren, Roger Manvell): *Twenty Years of British Films 1925-1945,* Falcon Press 1947.

DURGNAT, RAYMOND: *A Mirror for England,* Faber 1970. ·

EVES, VICKI: 'Britain's Social Cinema' in *Screen* v 10 n 6 November/December 1969.

FORMAN, DENIS: *Films 1945-1950,* British Council/Longmans Green 1952.

GIFFORD, DENIS: *The British Cinema* (illustrated index to stars, directors), Tantivy 1968.

GIFFORD, DENIS: *The British Film Catalogue 1895-1970,* David & Charles 1973.

LAMBERT, GAVIN interviewed by Jim Kitses in *Screen* v 13 n 2 Summer 1972.

LOVELL, ALAN: *The British Cinema, the Unknown Cinema,* BFI Education Department typescript 1969.

LOVELL, ALAN & HILLIER, JIM: *Studies in Documentary.* BFI/Secker & Warburg (Cinema One series) 1972.

PIRIE, DAVID: *A Heritage of Horror,* Gordon Fraser 1973.

PRICE, JAMES: article on the British Cinema in the *London Magazine,* December 1968.

RAPHAEL, FREDERIC: introduction to his script of *Two for the Road,* Jonathan Cape 1967.

RICHARDS, JEFFREY: *Visions of Yesterday* (with section on 'The Cinema of Empire'), Routledge & Kegan Paul 1973.

WINNINGTON, RICHARD: *Drawn and Quartered* (Collected Reviews), Saturn Press 1948.

WOOD, ALAN: *Mr Rank,* Hodder & Stoughton 1952.

Among periodicals see especially *Penguin Film Review* (nine issues, 1946-1949), *Sequence* (thirteen issues, 1946-1952) and the first issue of *Movie* (1962).

See also Bibliography 17 (British Cinema) available from the Library of the British Film Institute.

2. *Ealing Studio, Ealing personnel.*

ANDERSON, LINDSAY: *Making a Film* (on the production of *Secret People*), Allen & Unwin 1952.

ANDERSON, LINDSAY: 'The Sudio that begs to differ' in *Film and Theatre Today* (ed Gavin Lambert, J Clifford King), Saturn Press 1949.

BALCON, MICHAEL: *A'Lifetime of Films,* Hutchinson 1969.

CARSTAIRS, JOHN PADDY: *Honest Injun,* Hurst & Blackett 1942.

CAVALCANTI, ALBERTO interviewed by Jim Hillier, Alan Lovell, Sam Rohdie, additional material by Kevin Glover, in *Screen* v 13 n 2, Summer 1972.

CLARKE, T E B: *This is Where I Came In,* Michael Joseph 1974.

CUTTS, JOHN: article on Mackendrick in *Films and Filming,* June 1957.

DANISCHEWSKY, MONJA: *White Russian, Red Face,* Gollancz 1966.

DANISCHEWSKY, MONJA: (ed) *Michael Balcon's 25 Years in Films,* World Film Publications 1947.

DEAN, BASIL: *Mind's Eye* (volume 2 of memoirs: 1927-72), Hutchinson 1973.

DICKINSON, THOROLD: *article* 'The Work of Sir Michael Balcon at Ealing Studios' in *The Year's Work in the Film 1950,* British Council/Longmans Green 1951.

DICKINSON, THOROLD: also v sub ANDERSON.

HAMER, ROBERT: introduction to a section of the script for *Kind Hearts and Coronets* in *The Cinema 1952* (ed Roger Manvell), Penguin 1952.

HAMER, ROBERT interviewed by Freda Bruce Lockhart in *Sight and Sound* October-December 1951.

HAWKINS, JACK: *Anything for a Quiet Life*, Elm Tree Books 1973.

HOLT, SETH interviewed by Kevin Gough-Yates in Screen v 10 n 6, November/December 1969.

JAMES, DAVID: *Scott of the Antarctic: the Film and its Production*, Convoy 1948.

MACKENDRICK, ALEXANDER interviewed in *Film Teacher*, Spring 1953.

MACKENDRICK, ALEXANDER interviewed in *Positif* 92, February 1968.

MACKENDRICK, ALEXANDER: also v sub CUTTS.

MORE, KENNETH: *Happy Go Lucky*, Robert Hale 1959.

TENNYSON, PENROSE: a memoir by C T [Sir Charles Tennyson], A S Atkinson 1943.

WATT, HARRY: *Don't Look at the Camera*, Elek 1974.

See also the large number of Ealing production scripts deposited in the Library of the British Film Institute.

3. *Additional books referred to in the text, or otherwise of interest.*

ANDERSON, PERRY (ed, with Robin Blackburn): *Towards Socialism*, Fontana/New Left Review 1965.

ANDERSON, PERRY: 'Components of the National Culture', in *Student Power* (ed Alexander Cockburn, Robin Blackburn), Penguin 1969.

BARNETT, CORRELLI: *The Collapse of British Power*, Eyre Methuen 1972.

BOYLE, ANDREW: *Only the Wind will Listen* (biography of·Lord Reith), Hutchinson 1972.

BRIGGS, ASA: *The Birth of Broadcasting* (volume one of the History of Broadcasting in the UK), OUP 1961.

FOOT, PAUL: *The Politics of Harold Wilson* (containing an account in Chapter 2 of Wilson's postwar dealings with the British film industry, from the Board of Trade), Penguin 1968.

GELMIS, JOSEPH (interviewer): *The Film Director as Superstar*, Doubleday (New York) 1970, Penguin, London 1974.

HOBSBAWM, ERIC: *Industry and Empire*, Penguin 1969.

MAYERSBERG, PAUL: *Hollywood the Haunted House*, Allen Lane 1967.

NICOLSON, HAROLD: *Letters and Diaries* volume 2, Fontana edition 1971.

SHIPMAN, DAVID: *The Great Movies Star* volume 2, Angus & Robertson 1972.

SISSONS, MICHAEL (ed, with Philip French): *The Age of Austerity* (see in particular Michael Frayn's essay on the Festival of Britain), Penguin edition 1964.

TALLENTS, STEPHEN: *The Projection of England*, Faber 1932.

Ealing personnel

The entries cover all those who directed more than one film at Ealing (under Balcon), or who made a sustained contribution as a writer, or whose career illustrates in some way the Ealing system of continuity and of 'graduation' from role to role.

Films are dated by the last two figures of the year only, placed after the title: the date is normally that of first public showing. Ealing credits are complete, non-Ealing credits selective: the latter are in brackets. (For directors, full credits for British films made outside Ealing can usually be found in *British Cinema* by Denis Gifford.)

Abbreviations:
    ad art director

d director
cd co-director
ed editor
p producer
ap associate producer
s screenplay: main or sole credit
cs screenplay: joint credit
(s) original story
+d +ed +s: the + sign indicates subsidiary work eg additional
dialogue: a bracket indicates that this was un-
credited, eg (+d).

CAVALCANTI, ALBERTO, b 1897 Brazil. 1920-33 worked in France as writer,
director, art director. Then in England with GPO/Crown Film Unit,
mainly as producer. At Ealing 1940-46, then more films in England,
Brazil, Europe. For dates and titles, see the filmography appended
to the interview with Cavalcanti in *Screen* Summer 1972 pp 51-3.
Details of Ealing work: 1940-43 producer and director of docu-
mentaries including d *Yellow Caesar* '41. Features: supervising art
director on *The Ghosts of St Michael's* '41, *Turned out Nice Again*
'41, ap *The Big Blockade* '42, ap *The Foreman went to France* '42, d
Went the Day Well? '42, ap *Halfway House* '44, d *Champagne Charlie*
'44, cd *Dead of Night* '45, d *Nicholas Nickleby* '47.

CLARKE, T E B, b 1907. Journalist, then to Ealing as writer. +s *Halfway*
House '44, s *For those in Peril* '44, s *Johnny Frenchman* '45, +s *Dead*
of Night '45, s *Hue and Cry* '47, cs *Against the Wind* '48, s *Passport*
to Pimlico '49, cs *Train of Events* '49, s *The Blue Lamp* '50, s *The*
Magnet '50, s *The Lavender Hill Mob* '51, (cs *Encore* '51), s *The*
Titfield Thunderbolt '53, s *The Rainbow Jacket* '54, s *Who Done it?*
'56, s *Barnacle Bill* '57, (s *Gideon's Day* '58, cs *Law and Disorder* '58,
s *A Tale of Two Cities* '58, cs *Sons and Lovers* '60, s *Horse without*
a Head '63, cs *A Man could get Killed* '66).

COLE, SIDNEY, b 1908. Worked in various studios in the 1930s including
Ealing (ed *Midshipman Easy* '35, ed *The High Command* '37) 1938
to Spain with Thorold Dickinson making films for the Republican
government. Then editor in Britain (ed *Gaslight* '40, ed *Pimpernel*
Smith '41) 1942 to Ealing: supervising editor on *The Bells go Down*
'43, *Nine Men* '43, *Undercover* '43, *San Demetrio London* '43, *Half-*
way House '44, ap/cs *They came to a City* '44, ap *Loves of Joanna*
Godden '47, ap *Against the Wind* '48, ap *Scott of the Antarctic* '48,
cd *Train of Events* '49, ap *The Magnet* '50, ap *The Man in the White*
Suit '51, p *Secret People* '52, (p/cs *The Angel who pawned her Harp*
'54, p/cs *The Kitchen* '61: also Television production). Active in
Union work (ACT, subsequently ACTT).

CORNELIUS, HENRY, b 1913, South Africa. To England 1935 after work in
Germany (with Max Reinhardt) and France. Editor with Korda's
London Films (asst ed *The Ghost Goes West* '35, ed *The Four*
Feathers '39). 1940-43 in charge of film department, South African
propaganda service, directing many documentaries there. At Ealing:
ap *Painted Boats* '45, ap *Hue and Cry* '47, ap/cs *It Always Rains on*
Sunday '47, d *Passport to Pimlico* '49. Most of his subsequent films
had some Ealing connections. (d/cs *The Galloping Major* '51, d *Gene-*
vieve '53, d *I am a Camera* '55, d/s *Next to no Time* '58, (cd) *Law*
and Disorder '58, the last being completed after his death by Charles
Crichton).

CRICHTON, CHARLES, b 1910. Editor from 1935 with London Films (ed
Sanders of the River '35, *Things to Come* '36, *The Thief of Baghdad*
'40). 1940 to Ealing, working on documentaries, then features. ed *The*
Big Blockade '42, ap/ed *Nine Men* '43, d *For Those in Peril* '44,

d *Painted Boats* '45, cd *Dead of Night* '45, d *Hue and Cry* '47, d *Against the Wind* '48, d *Another Shore* '48, (+cd) *Whisky Galore* '49, cd *Train of Events* '49, d *Dance Hall* '50, d *The Lavender Hill Mob* '51, (d *Hunted* '52), d *The Titfield Thunderbolt* '53, d *The Love Lottery* '54, d *The Divided Heart* '54, d *Man in the Sky* '57. (cd *Law and Disorder* '58, d *Battle of the Sexes* '59, d/cs *The Boy who stole a Million* '61). Director on various Television series.

DANISCHEWSKY, MONJA, b 1911 in Russia. Publicity work for various companies in England, then to Ealing 1938 as publicity director. cs *Undercover* '43, ap *Whisky Galore* '49, cs *Bitter Springs* '50, (p/cs *The Galloping Major* '51), p/s *Meet Mr Lucifer* '53, p/+s *The Love Lottery* '54, (s *Rockets Galore* '58, p/s *Battle of the Sexes* '59, p/s *Two and Two Make Six* '62).

DEARDEN, BASIL, b 1911. Theatre actor/stage manager, notably with Basil Dean: joined Dean at Ealing as assistant in 1937. ap/cs *Let George do it* '40, ap/cs *Spare a Copper* '41, ap *Ghost of St Michael's* '41, ap/+s *Turned out Nice Again* '41, cd *Black Sheep of Whitehall* '42, cd *The Ghost Steps out* '42, d *The Bells go down* '43, cd *My Learned Friend* '43, d *Halfway House* '44, d/cs *They came to a City* '44, cd *Dead of Night* '45, d *The Captive Heart* '46, d *Frieda* '47, d *Saraband for Dead Lovers* '48, cd/cs *Train of Events* '49, d *The Blue Lamp* '50, d *Cage of Gold* '50, d *Pool of London* '51, d/cs *I Believe in You* '52, d *The Gentle Gunman* '52, d *The Square Ring* '53, d *The Rainbow Jacket* '54, d *Out of the Clouds* '55, d/cs *The Ship that died of Shame* '55, d *Who Done it?* '56, p *Davy* '57. Prolific as film (and television) director until his death in 1970 (d *The Smallest Show on Earth* '57, d *The League of Gentlemen* '60, d *Victim* '61, d/cs *The Man who Haunted Himself* '70).

DICKINSON, THOROLD, b 1903. Initially editor; worked at Ealing with Dean (p *Midshipman Easy* '35, d *The High Command* '37). 1938 films in Spain with Sidney Cole, then features in England (d/cs *The Arsenal Stadium Mystery* '39, d *Gaslight* '40, d *The Prime Minister* '41), d/cs *Next of Kin* '42, (d/cs *Men of Two Worlds* '46, d *Queen of Spades* '48), d/cs *Secret People* '52. Subsequently in charge of films at the United Nations, then Professor of Film at the Slade School, London.

DIGHTON, JOHN, b 1909. Playwright; screenwriter from 1932. With Balcon at GB, then with Warners, writing several vehicles for Claude Hulbert and for Max Miller. 1939 to Ealing. Solo script credit for *Nicholas Nickleby* '47, all other credits shared: *Let George do it* '40, *Saloon Bar* '40, *Sailors Three* '40, *Ghost of St Michael's* '41, *Turned out Nice Again* '41, *Black Sheep of Whitehall* '42, *Next of Kin* '42, *The Foreman went to France* '42, *The Goose steps out* '42, *Went the Day Well?* '42, *Undercover* '43, *My Learned Friend* '43, *Champagne Charlie The Man in the White Suit* '51 (s+ original play *The Happiest Days of your Life* '49, cs *Roman Holiday* '53, s *The Swan* '56, cs *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* '57, cs *The Devils Disciple* '59, s *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* '59).

EMMETT, E V H, b 1902. Journalist; actor; film editor and commentary voice for GB News 1930-44 (+s *Sabotage* '36). At Ealing intermittently: +s *The Ware Case* '39, +s *Young Man's Fancy* '39, ap (+ commentator) *Passport to Pimlico* '49, ap/cs *Dance Hall* '50. Died 1971.

FORDE, WALTER, b 1897. Silent comedian, Hollywood director, then with Balcon as director in the 1930s: moved to Ealing with him in 1938. Directed several shorts and six features: *The Gaunt Stranger* '38, *Let's be Famous* '39, *The Four Just Men* '39, *Cheer Boys Cheer* '39, *Saloon Bar* '40, *Sailors Three* '40. Other films after leaving Ealing (d/p *Cardboard Cavalier* '49), then to America.

FREND, CHARLES, b 1909. Editor from 1931, mainly with Balcon. 1933-37 Gaumont British, working frequently with Hitchcock (ed. *Waltzes from Vienna* '33, *Secret Agent* '36, *Sabotage* '36, *Young and Innocent* '37). 1937-39 MGM British (ed *A Yank at Oxford* '38, *The Citadel* '38, *Goodbye Mr Chips* '39). 1941 to Ealing as a director: *The Big Blockade* '42, d *The Foreman went to France* '42, d/cs *San Demetrio London* '43, d *Johnny Frenchman* '45, d *The Loves of.Joanna Godden* '47, d *Scott of the Antarctic* '48, d/cs *A Run for your Money* '49, d *The Magnet* '50, d *The Cruel Sea* '53, d *Lease of Life* '54, d *The Long Arm* '56, d *Barnacle Bill* '57. (d *Cone of Silence* '60, +d *Ryan's Daughter* '71).

HAMER, ROBERT, b 1911. Involved briefly with GPO unit, then feature editor (ed *St Martin's Lane* '38, *Jamaica Inn* '39). At Ealing: ed *Turned Out Nice Again* '41, ed *Ships with Wings* '41, ed *The Foreman went to France* '42, ap *My Learned Friend* '43, ap/cs/(+d) *San Demetrio London* '43, ap/cs/(+d) *Fiddlers Three* '44, cd *Dead of Night* '45, d/+s *Pink String and Sealing Wax* '45, (+d) *Loves of Joanna Godden* '47, d/cs *It Always Rains on Sunday* '47, d/cs *Kind Hearts and Coronets* '49, (d *The Spider and the Fly* '49), d/s *His Excellency* '52, (d/cs *The Long Memory* '53, d/cs *Father Brown* '54, d *To Paris with Love* '55, d/s *The Scapegoat* '59, d *School for Scoundrels* '60, cs *A Jolly Bad Fellow* '63, +s *55 Days at Pekin* '63). Also Television film direction (d *A Month in the Country* '55 for AR). Died 1963.

HOLT, SETH, b 1923. Actor; editor on some wartime MoI shorts; 1944 to Ealing, working as assistant or assembly editor until 1949 on films including *Dead of Night* '45, *Kind Hearts and Coronets* '49. (ed *The Spider and the Fly* '49). ed *Dance Hall* '50, ed *The Lavender Hill Mob* '51, ed *His Excellency* '52, ed *Mandy* '52, ed *The Titfield Thunderbolt* '53, ed *The Love Lottery* '54, ap *Touch and Go* '55, ap *The Ladykillers* '55, ap *Man in the Sky* '57, d/cs *Nowhere to go* '58, (ed *Battle of the Sexes* '59, ed *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* '60, d *A Taste of Fear* '61, d *Station Six Sahara* '62, d *The Nanny* '65, d *Danger Route* '67, d *Blood from the Mummy's Tomb* '71). Holt died before finishing the last-named film. For a fuller breakdown of his work see the Checklist in the *Monthly Film Bulletin*, May 1971.

KIMMINS, ANTHONY, d 1901. Playwright, actor; screenwriter and director from 1934, notably at Ealing under Dean, where he worked with Carol Reed (s *Midshipman Easy* '35, cs *Laburnum Grove* '36), Gracie Fields (cs *Queen of Hearts* '36 etc) and George Formby (d/cs *Keep Fit* '37, etc); continued at Ealing after Balcon's arrival, directing Formby: d/cs *Trouble Brewing* '39, d/cs *Come on George* '39. Balcon indicates that he would have used him at Ealing in a less narrow capacity had he not left for war service. Several films post-war (d/p *Mine Own Executioner* '47, d *Bonnie Prince Charlie* '48, d/p *The Captain's Paradise* '54). Died 1962.

LIPSCOMB, W P, b 1887. Actor, then writer, working in the 1930s both for Dean at Ealing (s *The Sign of Four* '32, s *Loyalties* '33) and for Balcon (cs *The Good Companions* '33, cs *I was a Spy* '33). 1934 to Hollywood, initially to adapt his own play *Clive of India*. More work in Hollywood and England (cs *Pygmalion* '38); briefly, scenario editor at Ealing: cs *Bitter Springs* '50, cs *Where no Vultures Fly* '51, +s *His Excellency* '52; (cs *A Town like Alice* '56), cs *Dunkirk* '58. Died 1958.

MACDOUGALL, ROGER, b 1910; cousin of Alexander Mackendrick. In films first as composer, then writer. cs *Let's be Famous* '39, cs *Cheer Boys Cheer* '39, cs *Spare a Copper* '41, s *The Bells go Down* '43. (From 1942 worked for several years as writer and director of documentary films for Merlin productions). cs *The Man in the White Suit* '51, s *The Gentle Gunman* '52, both based on his own plays. Has

worked since then mainly for the stage, occasionally in films (cs *The* *Mouse that Roared* '59).

MACKENDRICK, ALEXANDER, b 1912. In advertising, then films (cs *Midnight Menace* '37). Wartime cartoon scripts, then documentary work in Rome. 1946 to Ealing, initially as sketch artist. cs *Saraband for Dead Lovers* '48, d *Whisky Galore* '49, +s *The Blue Lamp* '50, cs *Dance Hall* '50, d/cs *The Man in the White Suit* '51, d *Mandy* '52, d *The Maggie* '54, d *The Ladykillers* '55, (d *Sweet Smell of Success* '56, (+d) *The Devil's Disciple* '59. (+d) *The Guns of Navarone* '61, d *Sammy Going South* '62, d *A High Wind in Jamaica* '65, d *Don't Make Waves* '68). Resident in America: TV work, commercials, teaching.

MACPHAIL, ANGUS, b 1903. Writer, closely associated with Balcon. 1927-31 scripts for Gainsborough, 1931-37 story supervisor for GB, 1939-48 story supervisor at Ealing. Main credit on *The Big Blockade* '42, all other credits shared: *Trouble Brewing* '39, *The Four Just Men* '39, *Return to Yesterday* '40, *Let George do it* '40, *Saloon Bar* '40, *Sailors Three* '40, *The Ghost of St Michael's* '41, *Black Sheep of Whitehall* '42, *Next of Kin* '42, *The Foreman went to France* '42, *The Goose steps out* '42, *Went the Day Well?* '42, *My Learned Friend* '43, *Halfway House* '44, *Fiddlers Three* '44, *Champagne Charlie* '44, *Dead of Night* '45, *The Captive Heart* '46, *Loves of Joanna Godden* '47, *Frieda* '47, *It Always Rains on Sunday* '47, *Whisky Galore* '49, *Train of Events* '49.

MELFORD, AUSTIN, b 1885. In theatre and revue, and a prolific screenwriter in the 1930s and '40s, working both for Balcon (cd/s *Oh Daddy* '35, cs *It's Love Again* '36) and for Dean at Ealing (cs *Feather Your Nest* '37, cs *I see Ice* '38, both with Formby), where he continued after Balcon's arrival: cs *Let George do it* '40, cs *Sailors Three* '40, cs *Spare a Copper* '41, s *Turned out Nice Again* '41, cs *Ships with Wings* '41, cs *Champagne Charlie* '44. Died 1971.

MORGAN, DIANA, b 1913. Actress, writer of plays and revues. cs *Ships with Wings* '41, cs *Went the Day Well?* '42, cs *Halfway House* '44, cs *Fiddlers Three* '44, s *Pink String and Sealing Wax* '45, +s *A Run for your Money* '49, (s *Poet's Pub* '49), cs *Dance Hall* '50, (s *Let's be Happy* '57).

NOLBANDOV, SERGEI, b 1895. To England from Russia in early 1920s; silent-film editor; also film work in Europe. Associated with Balcon at GB. At Ealing, worked closely with Penrose Tennyson. cs *The Four Just Men* '39, cs *There ain't no Justice* '39, ap *The Proud Valley* '40, ap *Convoy* '40, d/cs *Ships with Wings* '41, d/cs *Undercover* '43. 1943-45 worked for MoI on production of films for liberated territories; 1946-49 produced the documentary series *This Modern Age* for Rank. Later, producer at Pinewood and elsewhere (p *The Kidnappers* '53, p *Behind the Mask* '58, p *Mix me a Person* '62). Died 1971.

NORMAN, LESLIE, b 1911. Varied work pre-war (cd/ed *Too Dangerous to Live* '39). To Ealing initially as chief editor. ed/(+d) *The Overlanders* '46, ed *Nicholas Nickleby* '47, ed *Frieda* '47, ap *Eureka Stockade* '49, ap/cs *A Run for your Money* '49, ap *Bitter Springs* '50, ap/cs *Where no Vultures Fly* '51, p *Mandy* '52, p *The Cruel Sea* '53, p *West of Zanzibar* '54, d *The Night my Number came up* '55, (d *X the Unknown* '56), d/cs *The Shiralee* '57, d *Dunkirk* '58. Has worked since in films and Television (p/d *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* '59, d *The Long and the Short and the Tall* '60, d *Mix me a Person* '62).

PERTWEE, ROLAND, b 1886. Playwright, actor; many scripts in the 1930s including some for Balcon at Gaumont (cs *The Ghoul* '33, cs *King Solomon's Mines* '37), and at MGM British (cs *A Yank at Oxford* '38).

cs *The Ware Case* '39, cs *The Four Just Men* '39, cs *A Young Man's Fancy* '39, cs *Return to Yesterday* '40, cs *The Proud Valley* '40, +s *Halfway House* '44, (s) *Pink String and Sealing Wax* '45.

RELPH, MICHAEL, b 1915. Theatrical designer; assistant art director with Balcon in the early 1930s; art director for Warners (ad *They Drive by Night* '38), and then for MGM British. 1942 appointed chief art director at Ealing. ad: *The Bells go down* '43, *My Learned Friend* '43, *Halfway House* '44, *They came to a City* '44, *Dead of Night* '45., ap/ad *The Captive Heart* '46, ad *Nicholas Nickleby* '47, ap *Frieda* '47, ad/ad *Saraband for Dead Lovers* '48, ap *Kind Hearts and Coronets* '49, ap *Train of Events* '49, p *The Blue Lamp* '50, ap *Cage of Gold* '50, ap *Pool of London* '51, p/cs *I Believe in You* '52, p *The Gentle Gunman* '52, p *The Square Ring* '53, p *The Rainbow Jacket* '54, p/cs *Out of the Clouds* '55, p/cs *The Ship that died of Shame* '55, p *Who Done it?* '56, d *Davy* '57. All but two of these Ealing films were directed, in part or whole, by Basil Dearden; in some cases the pair were jointly credited with ' production and direction ', but *Davy* was still regarded as Relph's ' debut ' as director. He continued to work regularly in partnership with Dearden, usually as producer but sometimes with the roles again reversed (d *Rockets Galore* '58, d *Desert Mice* '59). Relph succeeded Balcon as head of the BFI's Production Board.

ROSE, WILLIAM, b 1918. American writer, working in British films 1948-58. (cs *Once a Jolly Swagman* '48, cs *My Daughter Joy* '50, cs *I'll get you for this* '51, cs *Song of Paris* '52, cs *The Gift Horse* '52, s *Genevieve* '53). s *The Maggie* '54, s *Touch and Go* '55, s *The Lady-killers* '55, cs *Man in the Sky* '57, s *Davy* '57. Returned to America to work for Stanley Kramer and others (cs *It's a Mad Mad Mad Mad World* '63, s *The Russians are Coming, the Russians are Coming* '65, s *The Flim Flam Man/One Born Every Minute* '67, s *Guess who's coming to Dinner* '67, cs *The Secret of Santa Vittoria* '69).

SMART, RALPH, b 1908. From 1927 editor, director of shorts, writer (cs *On the Night of the Party* '34, cs *Phantom Light* '35, both directed by Michael Powell and produced by Balcon). 1940 to Australia as director of propaganda shorts for Australian government. ap *The Overlanders* '46, (cd *Quartet* '48), +d *Eureka Stockade* '49 (cd *A Boy a Girl and a Bike* '49), d/cs *Bitter Springs* '50, cs *Where no Vultures Fly* '51 (cd *Never take No for an Answer* '52). Subsequently producer of TV films.

STEVENSON, ROBERT, b 1905. Writer and director with Balcon in the 1930s (cs *The Faithful Heart* '32, d/cs *Tudor Rose* '36, d *King Solomon's Mines* '37). Moved with Balcon to Ealing: d/cs *The Ware Case* '39, d *A Young Man's Fancy* '39, d/cs *Return to Yesterday* '40. Since then a prolific Hollywood director (d *Jane Eyre* '43), mainly for Walt Disney (d *Mary Poppins* '64, d *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* '71).

TENNYSON, PENROSE, b 1912. From 1932 with Balcon at GB (assistant d *The Man who knew too much* '34, *The 39 Steps* '35), then at MGM British (assistant d *A Yank at Oxford* '38, *The Citadel* '38, *Goodbye Mr Chips* '39). At Ealing: d/cs *There ain't no Justice* '39, d/cs *The Proud Valley* '40, d/cs *Convoy* '40. Then war service (some instructional shorts). Died 1941.

TRUMAN, MICHAEL, b 1916. From 1934 assistant editor, assistant director at various studios. 1939-44 producer of Army training films. 1944 to Ealing, initially as editor. Ed: *They came to a City* '44, *Johnny Frenchman* '45, *Pink String and Sealing Wax* '45, *Loves of Joanna Godden* '47, *It Always Rains on Sunday* '47, *Saraband for Dead Lovers* '48. ed/(+d) *Passport to Pimlico* '49, ap *The Lavender Hill*

Mob '51, *His Excellency* '52, p *The Titfield Thunderbolt* '53, p *The Maggie* '54, p *The Divided Heart* '54, d *Touch and Go* '55, (d *Go to Blazes* '62, d *Girl in the Headlines* '63). Died 1974.

VARNEL, MARCEL, b 1894. Paris. Stage and Hollywood experience; many comedies in Britain from 1934 (d *Oh Mr Porter* '37). At Ealing: d *Let George do it* '39, *Ghost of St Michael's* '41, *Turned out Nice Again* '41. Died 1947.

WATT, HENRY, b 1906. Director and writer of documentaries in the 1930s with the EMB/GPO film units (cd *Night Mail* '36). Also worked with Hitchcock (special effects for *Jamaica Inn* '39). Wartime documentaries (d/s *Target for Tonight* '41), then to Ealing 1942. d/s *Nine Men* '43, cs *For those in Peril* '44, d *Fiddlers Three* '44, d/cs *The Overlanders* '46, d/cs *Eureka Stockade* '49, d/cs *Where no Vultures Fly* '51, d/cs *West of Zanzibar* '54, d/cs *The Siege of Pinchgut* '59. Also Television work and lecturing. For titles and dates of his pre-Ealing work see *Screen* Summer 1972 p 48.

WHITTINGHAM, JACK, b 1910. Playwright; film critic of *Morning Post* 1936-37; screenwriter from 1939 (cs *Q Planes* '39, s *Green Fingers* '47). Under contract to Ealing in the early 1950s. cs *Cage of Gold* '50, cs *Pool of London* '51, cs *I Believe in You* '52, cs *Mandy* '52, (s *Hunted* '52), cs *West of Zanzibar* '54, s *The Divided Heart* '54. Subsequent work in films (p/s *The Birthday Present* '57) and in Television. Died 1972.